GOLD FEVER in the WEST

A VALLEY CALLED DEATH

WESTERNER

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JANUARY-FEBRUARY, 1975

NEW CLUES TO LOST DIGGINGS

"TO HELL WITH SHOSHONI"

THE DAY THE JARBRIDGE STAGE WAS LATE

THE GUNNESS MONSTER

MELHORN'S OVERLOOKED GOLD

ALL TRUE

NEVADA'S RED-HAIRED CANNIBALS

GUS LARSON GEORGE WIMSEY LEPPIE FRANK TUSCARORA JACK

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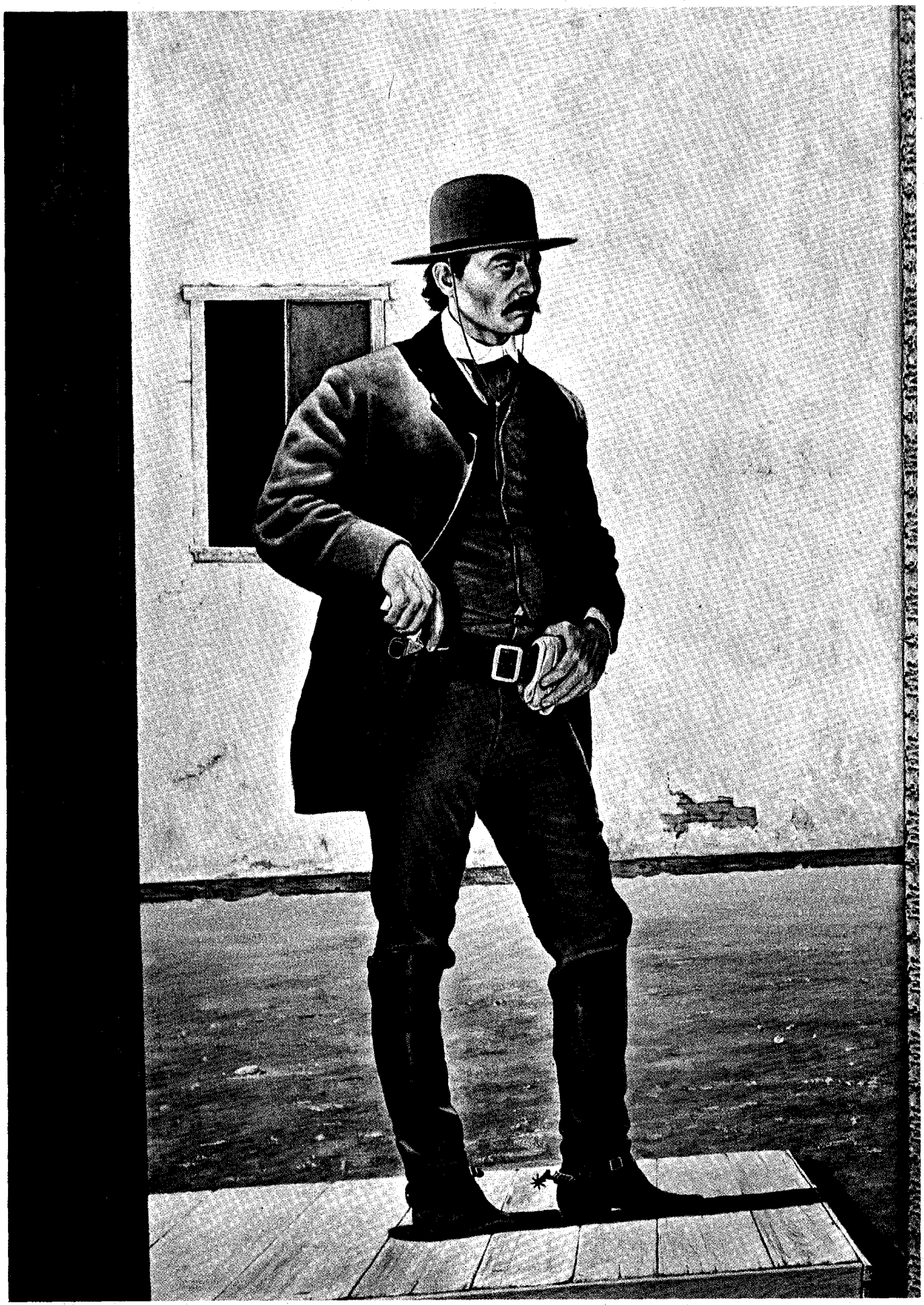

WESTERNER "Town Tamer" by Jerry Crandall

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WESTERNER

VOLUME 7, NUMBER 1 JANUARY-FEBRUARY, 1975

Special Issue!
GOLD FEVER!

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COVER

"When the fever hit" is the theme of this issue's cover painted for WESTERNER by the well known artist, Jim Daly. It captures the violence tempered with humor that is an ever present part of the raw west. Jim Daly's paintings may currently be seen in the Regency Galleries in Los Angeles, Calif.

BONUS — Color Print Suitable for Framing!!

"Town Tamer" is the title of the fine painting on the opposite page. It is the work of Jerry Crandall, an up and coming western artist who is becoming known as a man who paints history. His story and more paintings on page 40.

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The WEST AS IT WAS

by BOB BROWN

POKER . . . The western gambler made a pretty easy job of making a living. He didn't even have to be too good and didn't have to cheat at all if he kept his eyes open and learned to be a good judge of character. If he learned to pick his card playing partners he could almost get bored while he cleaned the other man of all his money.

If the other man wore a belt and suspenders too, it was a pretty safe idea that the man would bet only on a sure thing. The other guy couldn't be much to bluff if he was worried about keeping his pants up! If the man was a flashy dresser, it would be likely that he would go for broke on one turn of the cards and a man like that can clean you out even if it's by accident! You always avoid the fancy dresser . . . he might even be another professional gambler.

Gamblers always watched the other man's hands. If the man had rough, work worn hands, you could bet he didn't spend much time inside playing cards. On the other hand, if the man had soft hands and no suntan, better steer clear and avoid a chance of meeting someone that knew a lot about cards and the inside of the saloons.

COWBOY KISSIN' . . . When the cowhand went to a dance, he knew that someone there was sure to suggest that they have a candy breakin'. It was always the high point of any dance and it served several purposes. It was the western version of spin the bottle or Post Office.

Usually it was done with something like stick candy . . . Barber Pole Peppermint was very popular. You put the end in your mouth and your girl put the other end in her mouth. Then each of you eat candy until there is no candy left and the game ends in a kiss!

The kiss is one of the obvious purposes of the game. If the girl did not want to end the game in the kiss she would break the candy off before your lips met. If she did this she was declaring to everyone there that she was not connected to her partner and was open to dates from other men. It was pretty much hands off if two people were going steady. The dance was the place where you "Break it Off."

SNAKE BITE . . . The cowhand spent much of his life sleeping on the ground. Most of these men were well aware of the fact that they could be bit by a snake or other creatures, but it isn't too likely.

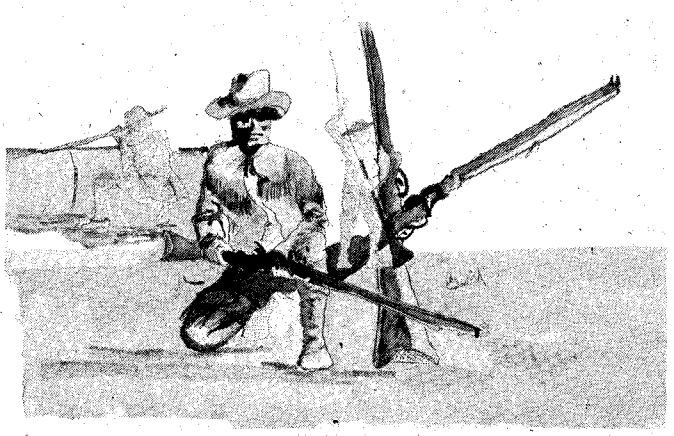
There were some men that had an abnormal fear of sleeping on the ground so they took unusual measures to keep things from crawling into their soogans. The most popular contraption used to keep varmints out of your bed was something called a skunk boat. It was a long piece of heavy canvas that was propped or tied up around the edges until it looked something like a boat. Your bed was placed inside the boat. It is very doubtful that it was designed to keep out skunks. Most likely the name was given by the cowhand to kid the man that was afraid of being bitten. Like the grass rope, the skunk boat wouldn't keep out much but the man inside would feel more comfortable.

The skunk boat would keep things in . . . like water when it rained. The man sleeping in this contraption could wake up treading water if an unexpected shower came up during the night.

MUZZLE LOADERS . . . There was once a backwoods gunsmith that built a very big reputation with the rifles that he was building. One of the biggest problems with a muzzle loading gun is the missfire. You either take special care with each loading or the rifle will fail you when you need it most. Even when you take special care with each loading there are going to be missfires.

The gunsmith was building rifles that simply didn't missfire if you took any kind of care at all with the loading. He had a secret because he had discovered an important fact. When the muzzle loader cap fires it will compress the air ahead of the spark and the spark sometimes will not get past the compressed air. When spark can't pass the air it cannot ignite the powder.

To eliminate this the gunsmith drilled a small vent hole in the nipple drum so the air could escape, and would not make a cushion against the fire from the cap. With this small hole he eliminated the largest cause of misfires and built an excellent business with his rifles.



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TIGHT BOOTS . . . With cowboots being as tight as a second skin, removing the boots at night gets to be something of a problem. Of course, around the bunkhouse you have a bootjack. This bootjack is usually a heavy or bulky affair that you wouldn't want to carry with you.

Out on a trail drive the men remove their boots at night because it's almost impossible to sleep in a pair of tight boots. On the trail drive there is usually a pair of mules or horses pulling the bootjack . . . they call it a chuck wagon. The men usually put their boot in a wagon wheel with the heel next to the hub. Once the boot is jammed in tight you can pull your foot free.

Flour was sometimes put in the boot to make it easier to slip off and on. Most often a little candle drippings was smeared in the heel to make it slick. The cowhand also said that the wax made his sox last longer.

HOT, HOT . . . The cowhand always ate hot peppers. His food was kind of plain to begin with and the peppers would give it a better flavor or kill the taste . . . which ever you want to look at it. The cowhand also got some of this pepper eating from his Mexican friends that always were near even though they lived south of the border.

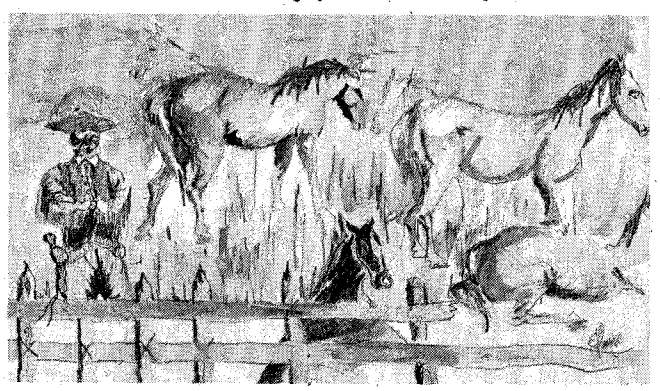
But there is another reason that the cowhand ate hot peppers. In the fall he ate all he could get because the peppers would sure keep him warm in the long winter

ahead! At least he thought the peppers would keep him warm, and he wasn't about to find out and freeze to death. And if it wasn't just for that, the pappers would also keep him from having colds. Cold germs and peppers just can't live together inside of a man. Everyone knows that!

If the cowhand DID take cold he would get a bottle of whiskey and add a few hot peppers to the whiskey. Then he would sit down and drink exactly one ounce of whiskey every hour. The next day it would be all gone. The whiskey . . . not the cold.

TWISTERS . . . There were two kinds of men that broke horses for a living. At least there were two kinds of methods used and a man that used either of these methods quickly earned a name and reputation for his special kind of work.

There were horse busters and horse twisters. The "Buster" would take his time and break the horse right so he would preserve the good qualities of the horse but this took longer to do so it was the most expensive method. The horse "Twister" was the guy that did the job in the least



possible time and was much rougher on the animal. Many times he would find that he had even made a few outlaws with his near brutal methods.

Both men were in demand but usually the "Buster" would find himself a home on a range with a boss that he particularly liked to work for.

A horse was seldom broken and then just ridden from that time on. Most of the ranch owners wanted the horses broken at three to three and a half years old. After the breaking the horse was then put out to pasture until it was five years old before going into regular service on a working ranch. A horse less than five years old was really considered to be a colt and nothing more than trading stock.

PROPHET . . . There were a great many men coming into the west that were guided in their daily lives by simple superstition. They believed in witches and ghosts and evil spirits that could cast a spell. Many believed in the spilling of salt, break-of a mirror and to put an X under the seat of a chair to keep witches away.

Even the people that didn't believe in these things liked to talk about them, so superstition was a favorite subject around the campfire. They would tell of strange things that they had heard and seen that had actually happened.

One of these stories was about a man that didn't believe in any of this superstition when he came west and would often laugh at people that looked to the "Signs" for a guide to what they would do. This man laughed most at a certain man that claimed he was a prophet and could predict things that wes going to happen in the future. The two got into a violent argument and ended in a fight that resulted in the death of the prophet.

The man that killed him soon found that he was able to predict the very day that he would die. It wasn't too hard to do this . . . a judge told him.

Illustrations by Edwin Lurssen

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Harry Webb's HORSE SENSE & NONSENSE

"Know anything about makin' a lemon pie?" Fred McGree asked as he handed me a gunny sack of odds and ends of grub.

"Sure," I replied. "Any halfwit should know that much. Just make a crust an' fill it with a batch o' goop that has lemon in it." I had seen a lemon pie being built one time and watched the cook grating the rind of a lemon to add color to the juice mixture. "Why? You got some lemons an' corn starch in this sack?"

"Bot somethin' a damsite better," came Fred's grunted reply as he turned his horse in our little corral. Fred had gone into double harness in Colorado and now his wife Mattie was cooking at the M Bar and Fred and I had been stuck off in a Line-camp holding a bunch of yearlings back on the west end of Stagner Mt. in the Owl Creek Range.

Fred didn't like the set-up too well and spent most of the blizzardy days griping and blaming me for getting him and "Matt" the job in the first place. Secondly, he didn't relish being away from his young wife. When I was a kid in Colorado, Fred, being much older, had bossed me around just as if I was a kid-brother and now that we were thrown together in this Wyoming log hut he was more bossey than ever.

"Alright, cook," he said as we sorted out the stuff brought from the ranch, "I'm starved, so what says you bake a big lemon pie an' we'll fill up on just pie an' coffee?"

"Better grab a bakin' powder biskit," I advised, "as you just don't build a lemon pie in five minutes! I haven' had a bite to eat since daylight either so my guts are just as lank as yourn'" I had beat Fred to camp only a few minutes.

" I c'n wait," he grunted. "Get mixin' while I fire up our tin stove."

" I don't see any cornstarch in this mess," I said, "so what the hell do I use for mixin? Flour? And what about a lemon, or some extract?"

"Dammit," Fred exploded, "I told you everything's in that package except the crust! All yuh gotta do is t' be able t' read. The receipt is right on the package, so read the receipt (everyone in those days pronounced recipe "receipt") an' git busy."

In no time I had a good batch of dough mixed and with a beer bottle for a rolling pin and a "Fish" brand slicker on the little table the crust, in a tin plate, was baking. Then I turned to the little package Fred said was the "works." That package didn't look like it would make much of a pie but the instructions said it would so no use to argue with the manufacturer. Seemed everything was there except the yolk of an egg for the filling and the beaten white for the topping.

No matter how diligently I followed the "receipt" it didn't sound right to me. In fact it sounded goofy. But as I stirred the packaged powder, suger, salt, egg yolk and water in a stew pan I could see it was going to be a darned good pie at that.

"STAND DIRTY, MEN! MY NEW HELPER IS A LITTLE SLOW ON TH' PAN CAKE MIX!

"A hell of a lookin' pie crust!" Fred mumbled as he pulled it from the oven. "Damn things thick as my foot!"

"Must of got a little too much bakin' powder in it," I said. "Besides, if you was bent on a pie why the hell didn't you have Matt bake a crust an' fetch it with you?"

"There yuh go with one o' your boob-ideas!" he browled. "Wouldn't I look fine carryin' a pie crust fifteen miles in my hand?"

Fred could hardly wait for the froth (which women now call "meringue") to brown on our pie. In fact, I couldn't either, and to hurry matters along I set the pie on a snow bank to cool, a big mistake — or maybe it wasn't. When we looked out to see how it s coming along two magpies were pecking in it.

"To hell with that!" Fred yelled. "We'll eat it hot!" The magpies had messed up the topping (for which I got the blame as usual) but Fred grudgingly admitted it still resembled a lemon pie, though he said "the crust's so damn thick we can eat it like we would a hunk of watermelon."

Both being ravenous Fred cut the pie across the middle and scooped my half on another tie plate and I was in the act of getting the coffee pot off the stove when I heard a choking "Jesus Christ!" and saw Fred staggering outside. When I reached him he was retching and gasping for breath. "What the blazing hell did you put in that damn pie?" he finally managed to ask.

"I just followed the receipt," I told him. "But if you ask me I don't think much of any pie that comes in a package!" When Fred was able we went in and looked at his pie. "Holy Mackrel!" I said. "From the half moon in your hunk you must of swallowed half of it in one bite! No wonder you choked."

"Taste it," He gasped as he wiped tears away with the dish towel. A bare taste was all I needed to tell me something had gone haywire along the line and I retrieved the box in a hurry.

As I studied the directions it didn't take long to see what was wrong — a hell of a *lot* wrong. That "receipt" called for one cup of sugar, a quarter teaspoon of salt, etc. etc. Somehow, I must have misread the ingredients. I had put a *cupful of salt* and a quarter spoon of sugar. Never mind Fred's remark. You couldn't make me repeat here what Fred said if you drove bamboo slivers under my fingernails!"

See yuh next time around.

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LETTERS TO WESTERNER

Geography Off

Dear Westerner,

After having practiced medicine in Arizona for over 45 years and having been fortunate enough to meet many of the individuals "who were here when," I believe the article in WESTERNER, September-October 1974, page 21, on Territorial Motoring by D. Thomas is very good. I have heard these tales and many others so I know that the writer has at least talked to someone "who was where when."

His facts are right, but, his geography is exactly 180° off. Maricopa is right close to 40 miles due south of Phoenix.

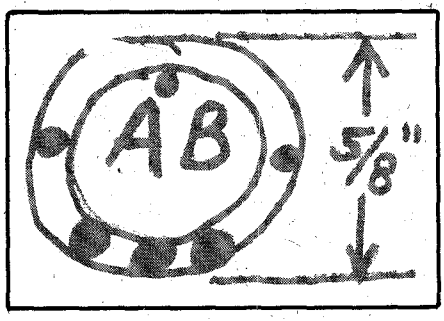
Martin C. Flohr, M.D.
Williams, Arizona

Mystery Button

Gentlemen:

As a long-time reader of Western Magazines (going back to Street & Smith's Wild West Weekly in the middle '20's) I enjoyed reading your WESTERNER for the first time.

Recently found a screw-back button consisting of a brass gold-pan with six (6) small nuggets of gold soldered on to the inside and also the letters AB in gold. It looks like this:



Have been told that it was a lodge button for men who made the '49 Gold Rush. Maybe you or your readers can tell.

Sincerely,
R.D. McGuirk
Phoenix, Arizona

Quantrill-Like Gun

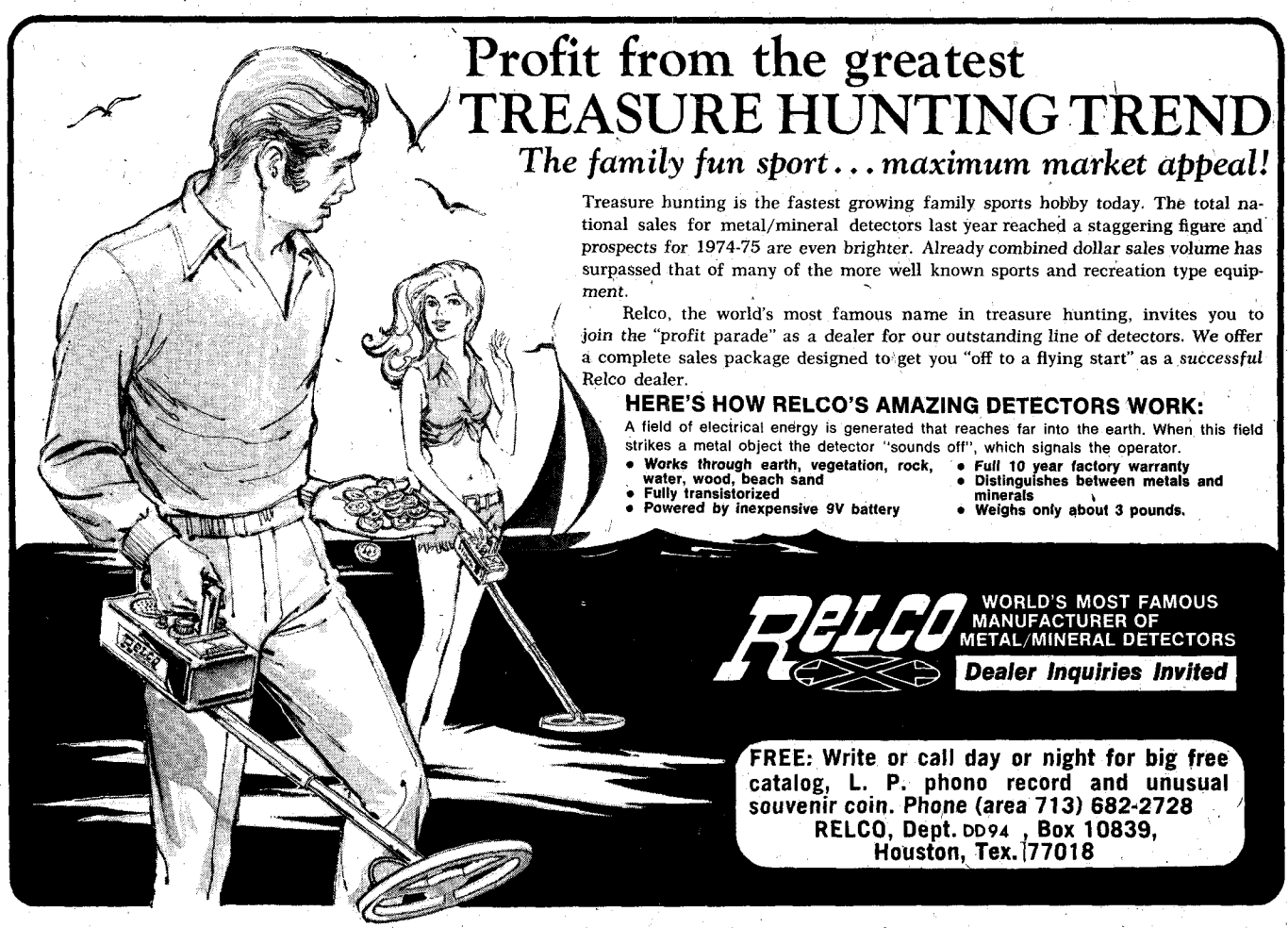
The Westerner,

I own a pistol that's almost a duplicate to the one used by Quantrill when he shot Abraham Ellis in the head; except the one I have is an 1850 Pat. Colt .44 - 6 shot, cap & ball model. I also have the original holster for it, and was used by my Great Uncle, Spencer A. Hamblin, at Missionary Ridge & Pittsburg Landing in the Civil War. Pittsburg Landing, Tenn. was the original name for Shiloh, and at that time some spelled it "Shiloah." Possibly a southern pronounciation I also have a complete copy of his military record, and all other records from his birth to his death. Also a 1776 "Carpet Bag" that he used to sell real estate in Oklahoma after the Civil War ended.

On April 2, 1862, a piece of sharpnel shattered his left knee and this injury put him "out of the fight" and he was given a honorary medical discharge and received a small pension the rest of his life. (That's more than many injured veterans receive today — myself included.)

He saved the piece of sharpnel and chiseled the place & date on it. I put all of these items in a good museum, along with his medal for Civil War service. During Quantrills Time there were several different Caliber pistols made by Colt, and other manufacturers and many of them looked very much alike.

W. Thayer
Wenatchee, Wash.



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ATHER'S SEARCH FOR THE WEST'S RICHEST TREASURE

NEW CLUES TO THE LOST ADAMS DIGGINGS

by Langford Johnston
as told to Eve Ball

There are many stories of the search for the Adams Diggings and this is my father's, as I heard it many, many times. I even accompanied him on one of them. In addition, I have his manuscript in which he tells the story. Even when I was a child it fascinated me as it has many others. I am informed that James Kaywaykla, great-nephew of the Warm Springs chief, Nana, knew of the discovery of the gold, and of the murder of the white men who disobeyed the orders of the Apache chief, Nana, as to where they might take gold, But Kaywaykla, if he knew that location, never told it to anybody.

I knew Captain Shaw, with whom my father made the search, very well, and have heard him repeatedly give his account, identical with that of my father. It is as follows:

John H. Adams was born in Rochester, New York on July 10, 1829. Even as a school boy he was interested in reading of Arizona and New Mexico and of their Indians and cowboys, and he wanted to see that mysterious and beautiful country. How he made a livelihood is not

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Langford Johnston Sr. (circle at left) getting water from ice caves. Note the enormous size of the rock formation.

Dad (above) when he went with Shaw in search of the Adams Diggings. Several of the expeditions lasted almost a year.

Photos supplied by author

known, but he married and had three children. In the late fifties, he sailed from New York to San Diego, California, and engaged in freighting. He may have had some money, but it is certain that he was able to get credit for more, and he bought two wagons and fourteen head of horses. From 1861 till 1864 he hauled freight from San Diego to Tucson, and during those three years paid off his indebtedness and accumulated two thousand dollars in savings. At that time two thousand dollars was a big sum of money.

Since there was no mention of his having employed a driver it is probable that his wagons were hitched tandem, and that he made the trips alone. In the summer of 1864 while returning to the coast from Tucson, he camped one night at Gila Bend. Because for three years he had never been molested, he had no apprehensions until he was awakened before dawn by unearthly shrieks. He jumped up to see dimly three Indians stampeding his horses. In the moonlight he pursued them over a little ridge on foot. After walking about a mile, he was able to catch a horse. Because of being hobbled they

The Author at his home in Selma, Calif.

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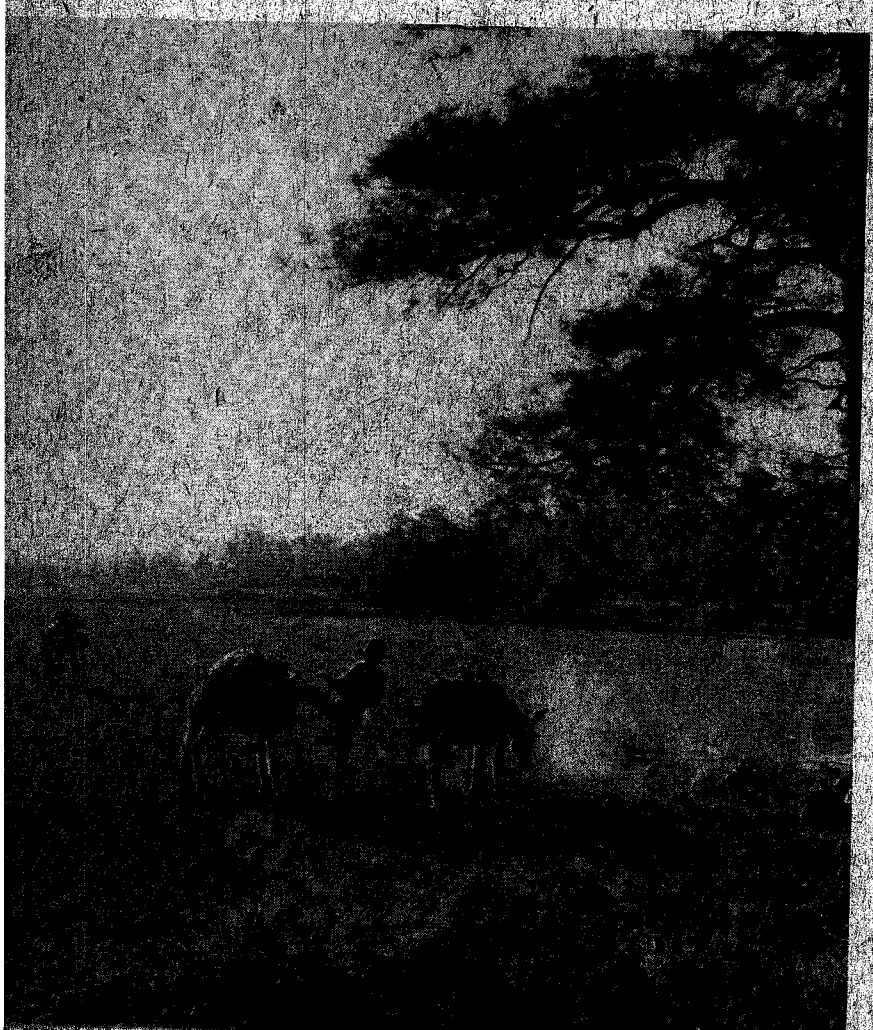
Johnston (above) in the Rincon. Below is another view of the ice caves which may be located nearby the actual diggings.



As old sourdough will testify, half the fun of prospecting is partaking of many of the outdoors. Here the hunters prepare to set out in the morning.

had been unable to travel fast. From others that he overtook he removed hobbles enough to make a crude bridle. So he mounted and started the animals back toward his wagons. As he topped the rise he saw that they were in flames. Then he realized that driving the horses off was a ruse to lure him from his camp. He could see Indians, whom he judged to be Pimas or Papagoes, dancing wildly between him and the burning wagons. Had they been Apaches he would not have been surprised, but he was unable to understand why these other tribes, who had been friendly for years, should do such a thing.

The money for which he had

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been paid was in canvas bags in a box in the lead wagon and he knew that it would be useless to attempt to retrieve it. So he rode east toward Maricopa Wells, some thirty miles away. Late that afternoon, with his horses, he rode up to the house of a friend to whom he told of his losses. His host put them into a corral and fed them grain. And Adams spent the night with him.

The hardy pioneers of that time faced death as a matter of routine, and they accepted what came. But Adams said that at no time in his life had he felt so despondent as he did then. That evening he walked across the road to the general store which housed also the post office and a saloon. Many writers have depicted him as a drunken bum, but he drank rarely, and when he did seldom took more than two

While at the bar he overheard a group of men discussing their dire need for horses. He joined them and learned that they were prospectors outfitting for a trip. Among them was a man whom Adams at first judged to be a Mexican. A man was talking to him in Spanish, and Adams understood part of the conversation. He learned that this man was part Indian, and had been captured by the Apaches with whom he lived for years until they sold him to a sheep man who was a member of the band of prospectors. Adams heard this man tell of a place where there was "*mucho oro.*" For his services as guide to this treasure he was demanding two good mounts and a silver mounted saddle belonging to one of the party. He asked also that he be given a six shooter, a rifle and ammunition.

One called Davidson seemed to share with this sheepman in having charge of the expedition. The former told Adams that they were in need of horses for the search. Adams replied that if they would include him, that they might have the use of his fourteen. He figured that though he had never had any interest in hunting gold, that he had lost his wagons and cargo, and that there was little more to lose. His offer was accepted and he became the trusted friend of Davidson, and of an old Dutchman in the group. Strangely, these three were the only survivors of the party.

On the 20th of August, 1864, the fourth day after Adams' arrival at Maricopa Wells, the cavalcade of twenty-one mounted men and twelve pack horses, guided by the Mexican started upon their disastrous journey. Not only did it cost many lives, it also affected those of many of their number, who, like them, were intent upon finding the coveted gold.

They travelled in a northeasterly direction and crossed the Salt River where there is now a bridge across Highway 60. For six days more they continued, but on the last, bore more to the east. Adams said that last day was the roughest travelling he had ever done, and he estimated that they did not make more than twelve miles, though previously they had come so rapidly that the pack train had to move at a trot to keep up with the riders.

That night they camped at a lake between Mts. Ord and Thomas.

The morning of the seventh day the guide headed for one bluff of a canyon, one that presented the appearance of an unbroken wall. For the first time the men suspected that

asked if he thought they
that cliff. The guide smile
"Follow me." At the foot o
there was an opening, a n
and the men rode into
following a 'Z' the men fou
canyon opened more, but
was rough and difficult and
forced to travel slowly. Afte
referred to this opening and
the Little Door and the Z. O

That afternoon they
another canyon and in
miners from California
gold bearing gravel. Th
panning with far better r
they had ever seen before
threw their hats into the ai
that they were now millio
Mexican laughed and told
this was nothing and tha
take them where they
nuggets off the sand by the

Already men were
They made so much noise
Dutchman, an experien
fighter, said, "Mein Gott!
will hear you and ve vill
When the miners replied t
not fear the whole Apac
Dutchman shook his head
more.

Because they had o
picks and shovels for half t
organized shifts. And wh
the other began cuttin
assembling stones for bui
place for the cabin they
erect. Alternating crews
each until they had bu
shelter. They carefully
terrain in order to insure
front of the fireplace they
flat stone for a hearth. U
done each man kept his
but it was decided that a
be hollowed beneath the
that they pool their gold
equally later. The only
this plan was that of the D

Each evening the
hobbled and the men took
as guard.

The house stood abo
fall. Both the captain an
were sure of that, thoug
know other versions of t
it below. Though they
were Apaches in the vicin
not molested. However,
Chief Nana appeared. Th
upon the guide to act.
but to their surprise the
spoke Spanish fluently.
white men that so long a
come below the fall they
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Cont

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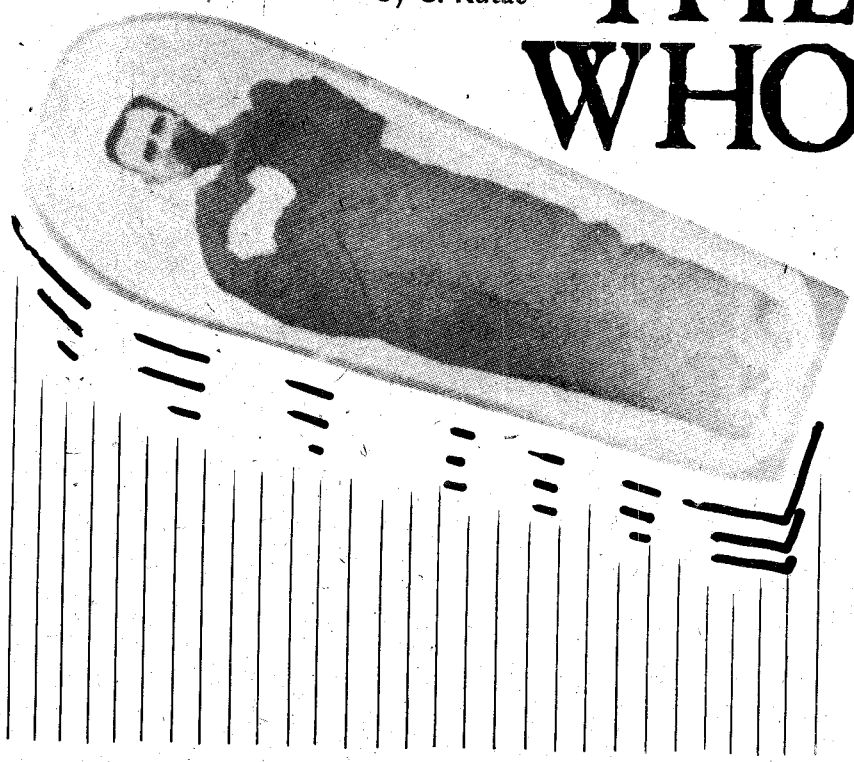
Photo of Father Juan Padillo taken in 1895.

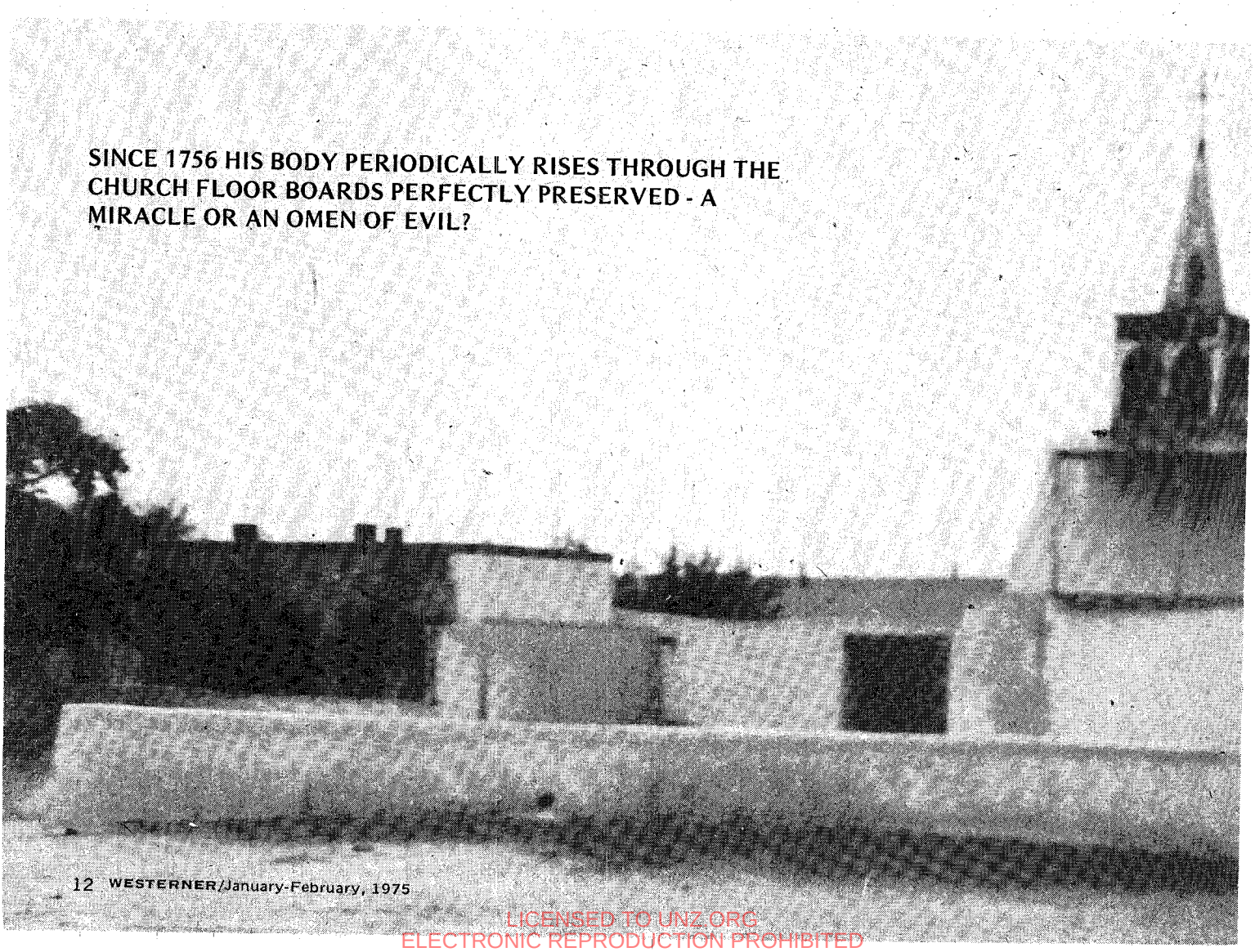
by C. Kutac

THE PRIEST WHO WON'T STAY BURIED



Strange and mystifying is the legend surrounding Father Juan Jose de Padilla, who lies buried in the church at Isleta Pueblo, New Mexico. At least he's buried there most of the time, for that's the very nucleus of the legend — every twenty or twenty-five years, Padilla's coffin pushes it's way to the surface of the ground. And although his religious habit has long since dissolved into dust, his body has not.

SINCE 1756 HIS BODY PERIODICALLY RISES THROUGH THE CHURCH FLOOR BOARDS PERFECTLY PRESERVED - A MIRACLE OR AN OMEN OF EVIL?



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The most widely held version of the padre's death is a mixture of fantasy and village gossip. We're led to believe that in February of 1756, a horse was found outside the mission, with the body of Father Padilla lashed to it's back. From here on, the legend goes that Father Padilla was killed because a drunken man came home and found the good padre alone with his wife. Before the terrified wife could explain how innocent the whole thing actually was, the man stabbed and killed Father Padilla. Then, in remorse and fear, the man and his wife quickly tied the priest's body to his horse, knowing that the animal would find it's way back to the mission. According to church records, however, Father Padilla died after receiving the last rites, so he certainly couldn't have been found dead outside the church.

Church records do bear out the part of the legend about Father Padilla's body resurfacing every so many years, and in an incorruptable state, to boot. First buried in 1756, there is a second burial entry in 1775 when the body rose free and undamaged to the surface of the ground. The third time the body was buried, it was placed in a crude cottonwood box.

Then in 1819, Fr. Sanchez reported that a coffin, bearing the body of Father Padilla had by slow degrees been raising up, until now the wood was visible. Upon opening the coffin, they found that the habit had rotted away to dust, but the body was whole, except for tongue, eyes and toes of one foot. The corpse was pliable enough that it's arms could be flexed while dressing it in a new habit. And although the corpse of Father Padilla had lain buried since 1756, it had not begun to decay, and there was no odor to it. After displaying the body to the public, the corpse was reburied with a paper certifying that so far, Padilla had been buried three times. The first time was when he died, the other two times were when he had risen to the surface of the ground.

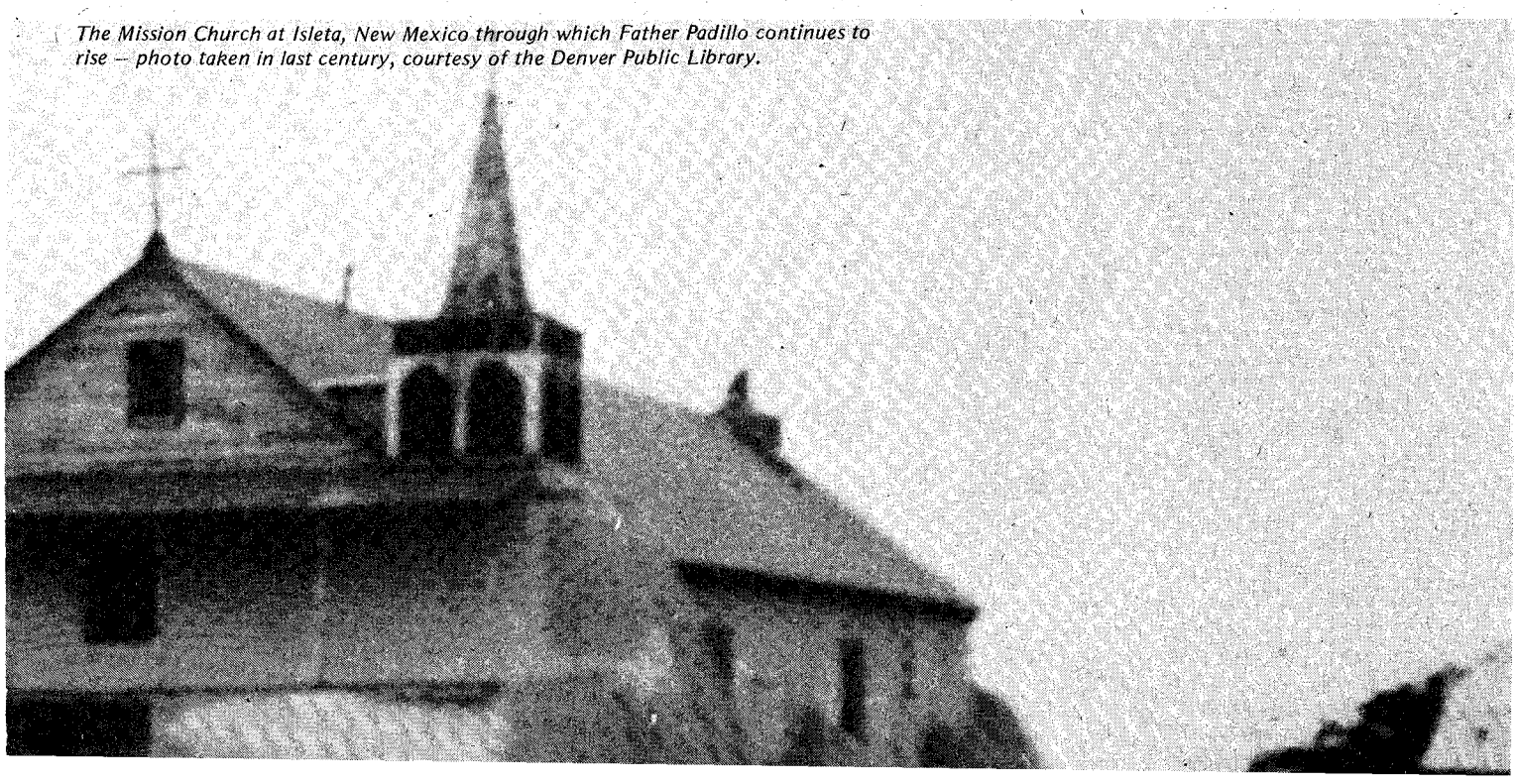
Floor boards, laid in the chapel, prevent anyone from knowing when the priest's coffin surfaced again. However, when a committee, which came to examine the body, ripped up the floor of the Church in 1895, they found that the coffin had once again worked it's way to the surface of the ground.

According to legend, in 1911 the nails in the floor boards were pushed up, announcing the surfacing of the priest's body. At that time, pieces of the priest's cassock were secreted away by the Indians, to be handed down as fetishes. Although it's not supported by written records, its said that the padre's face appeared life-like and he sported a long black beard.

Records do tell us that another examination of the body in 1948 found that Padilla's torso and arms are still covered with skin, that was pliable and soft to the touch.

The entire story of Padilla's restless corpse leaves us with several puzzling questions. Why is the body so well preserved and why does it persist in pushing its way to the surface of the ground? Before skeptics answer, let me add that other corpses buried, in the same area, readily decay and leave only bones. And to further mystify, there's the fact that although others are buried within the church, Father Padilla's corpse is the only one that refuses to stay buried.

The Mission Church at Isleta, New Mexico through which Father Padillo continues to rise — photo taken in last century, courtesy of the Denver Public Library.



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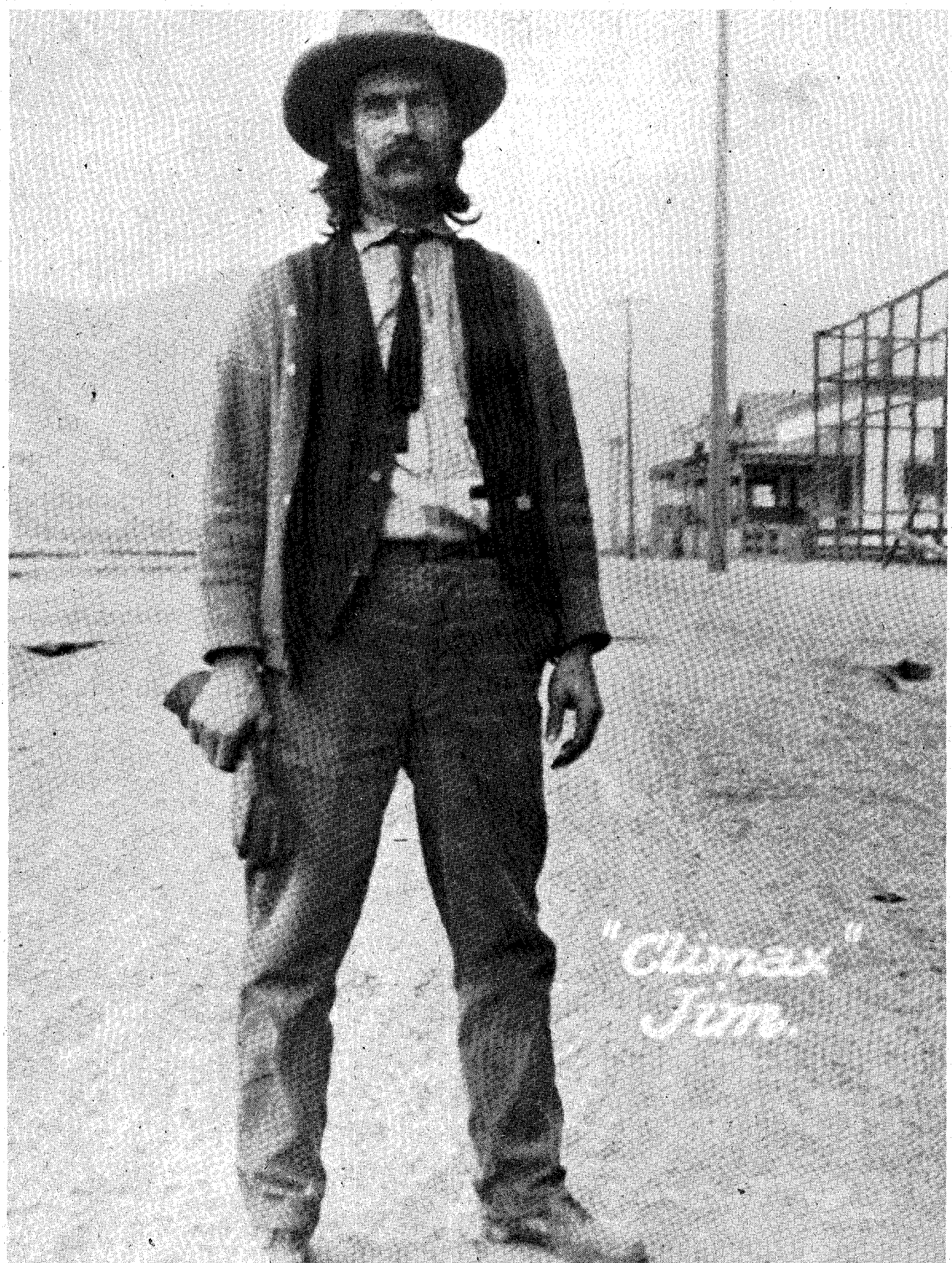

Climax Jim

He Was Slippery As A Greased Pig When It Came To Breaking Jail, But His Best Performance Came The Day He Ate The Prosecutor's Evidence

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by Charles Waltrip

CLIMAX JIM

Grizzly bearded mountain men, stern old cattlemen and grim-faced settlers from the Gila Valley in Arizona sat in the jury box. The county attorney plunged into a narration of misdeed after misdeed of the notorious cowboy cattle rustler.

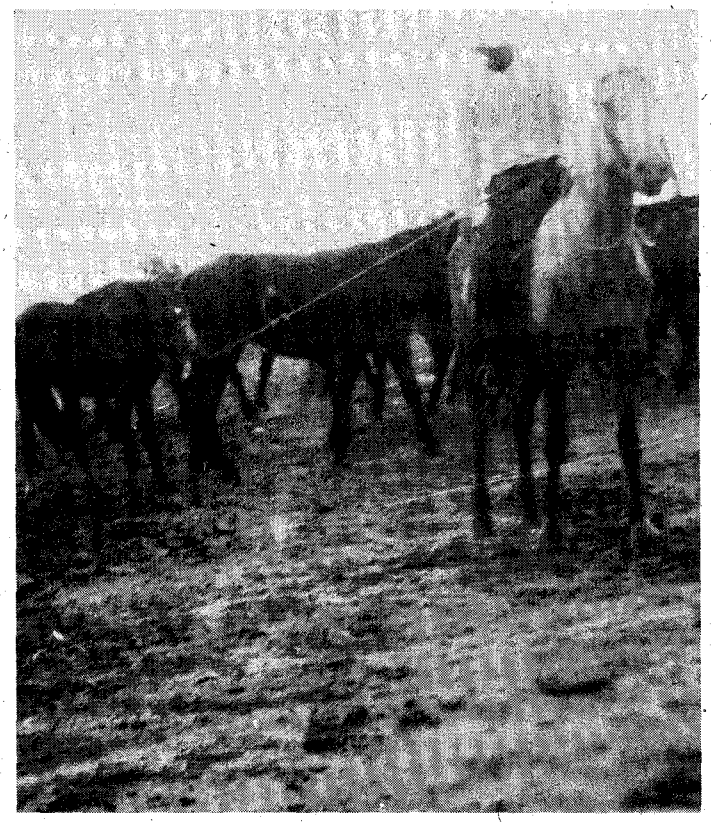
"Gentlemen of the jury, the Territory of Arizona will prove to you that this defendant is the most dangerous criminal known from Hardscrabble Creek to the Mexican border. There is not a jail in this part of the Territory that has not housed him, but not for long, for he has broken out of every one of them."

The attorney raised his pleading eyes to the reticent jury, and read the long list of accounts of the outlaw's notorious acts and cunning wiles in breaking jail. He read how Climax Jim, alias Jim Thomas, alias Rufus Nephews was once confined in a steel cell with seven other desperados shackled in pairs. A horse thief and Climax Jim were bound together with handcuffs and leg irons, he said. The next morning the handcuffs were found on the floor and the leg irons were hanging on the jail house door. Climax had done this with his nimble fingers and clever mind, the attorney told them.

It was true that Climax Jim was never known to carry a gun, but the weapons he carried were far more interesting and bizarre. He had an uncanny skill in removing handcuffs and leg irons. With his deft and agile fingers, no lock and key on jail-house door could hold him long. He often disappeared like a desert mirage, like dew from grass on a July morning.

"The outlaw is a slippery eel," said the attorney. "He is a dangerous man in or out of jail. Once, as all peace officers know, the defendant had been handcuffed to a highly respected sheriff and taken over the mountain trail. When they camped for the night, the defendant slipped the handcuffs off his own hands, handcuffed the sheriff and disappeared before he awoke.

"Many times," the attorney went on, "the defendant has cleverly spirited away witnesses who were to appear against him, and he never served a term in prison!"



Photos supplied by author

Jim's rustling technique involved leading "stray" cattle from the Chiricahua Cattle Co. to Mexico and then selling them for a handsome profit. But proving he did this in a court of law was a difficult matter.

He told how Climax Jim was indicted in Graham County, Arizona for rustling cattle. The rustler had witnesses to prove that the offense was not committed in Graham County but in Apache County. Climax Jim was acquitted. Later he was indicted in Apache County for the same charge but witnesses proved that the offense was not committed in Apache County but in Graham County. Again he was acquitted.

Climax Jim had been indicted for cattle stealing numerous times but never under his real name. He was impecunious and utterly friendly, and because of his easygoing nature, ready wit and sly, cunning maneuvers, big cattle outfits and the courts were

Continued on page 54

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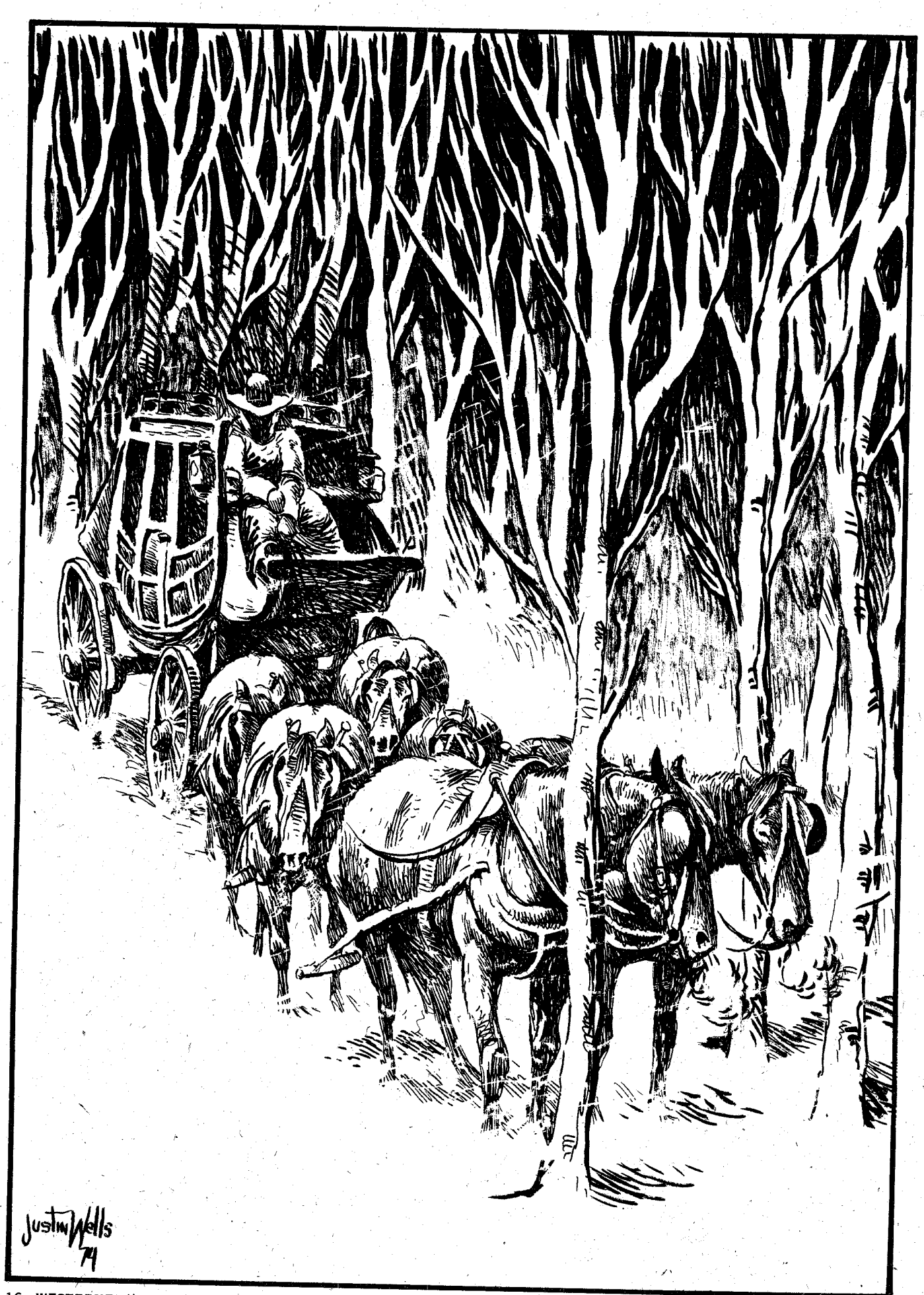

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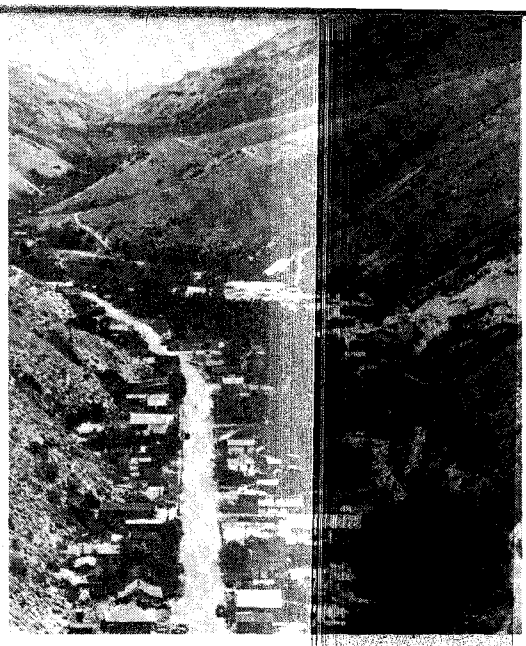
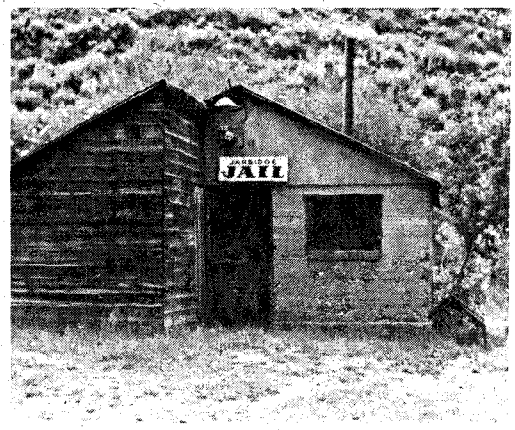


Jarbridge (left) at the time of the murder and robbery. Below is the jail where Kuhl was temporarily held.



Photos supplied by author

The Day the Jarbridge Stage Was Late

IT'S A DATE OLD TUSCARORA JACK WILL REMEMBER FOR THE REST OF HIS LIFE

by Edgar Web

Apprehension further corrugated the features of the half dozen miners and freighters as they discussed the lateness of the Jarbridge Stage. "I still maintain," Bill Ball was saying, "somebody ought to take a horse an' head for the summit. That grade's slicker'n a peeled onion this time o' year an' I'm feared we'll find Fred an' his outfit hangin' in the pines a thousand feet down that mountainside." Ball had hauled in a load of freight the day before from Rogerson, Idaho, and knew the danger that lurked along that grade in winter.

"Bill's right, fellows," one put in. "Yuh know how clost the road hugs the canyon there for half a mile. Scared me just t' prod my jackass along that stretch o' the Crippen Grade."

"Well," another offered, "let's wait another hour and if Searcy ain't here we better start investigating. But the way I see it, if the stage did go over the rim Fred would of jumped clear and could be walking in for help right now. He's young and I don't believe he'd stick with that stage if she slewed off into the canyon."

"Yeah," Jack McLaughlin put in as he stood in the door peering into the howling blackness, "but supposin' he was hittin' a pretty good clip an' shot off sudden like? You remember when Whistlin' Rufus' wagons slid fof that Bullion Grade? Well he *jumped* but he hit the bank an' wound up under a wagon all smashed to hell."

So ran conjectures as anxious watchers took turns going to the door. Face-cutting snow and the eerie howl of wind screaming down Jarbridge's narrow street, only added to their worry. "I don't like the looks of this," Postmaster Scott Fleming said. "I'm like Jack, there. I'm afraid something drastic has happened. Searcy's a hell of a good teamster but that don't mean something can't happen on that grade and especially when it's icy." He looked at a shelf clock. "Two hours late already. But it's a fearful night to go looking for anybody in a blizzard that cuts your eyeballs out. We should do *something*, though, besides stand around worrying." But on this particular night of December 5th, 1916 there was little anyone could do except worry. Suggestions of sending a rider to the grade came but as an early night had closed in they decided to wait a while longer.

Jarbridge, Nevada was a unique town in that it was located in a natural, monstrous amphi-theatre setting. According to one old inhabitant some mighty upheaval had "blowed one side of a crater out and slung gold from Hell to Breakfast."

There had been gold everywhere, alright! Even as late as 1930, when the camp had passed its heyday and its most valuable asset being an ideal picnic and recreational spot, "Oz" Miller, a young Elko bank clerk made a strike right beside a street that caused a resurgence of activity in the old camp.

While picnicking there Oz had sat atop a huge boulder while he wife snapped a picture of him, and handling plenty of gold coins during his years with the bank qualified him to know gold when he saw it and he now saw it. That boulder enriched the fifteen dollar a week bank teller by several

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JARBRIDGE STAGE

thousand dollars. Following that discovery butchers, bakers and barbers rushed in and overturned every boulder and dug into every likely spot. But that one boulder had been *it* and the camp returned to a mecca for picnickers to play and rehash the murder that had rocked this very spot in years gony by.

Those in the Post Office were still arguing plans pro and con regarding the next move when a Roulette dealer came in, slammed the door against the gale, dug snow out of his overcoat collar and stood looking at the crowd. "What's the matter?" he asked. "You fellows all look like the mines had all gone bust!"

"Worse than that!" the Postmaster replied. "No stage yet and we're worried."

"The hell?" said the newcomer. "Well, Newt Crumley will be a damsite *more* worried if anything's happened to that stage. He sent me over to pick up a wad of cash he had coming on it to cash the miners' checks. Wonder what could of happened?"

"What we'd like to know," came the lament. "Fred's been late a couple of times but never anything like this."

"You don't suppose—" began the Crumley employee then halted.

"What was you about to suppose?" someone asked.

"Just wondering" came the thoughtful answer, "if the stage driver knew there was over three thousand in the mail for Newt's saloon and decided to go West with it?" This put a new angle on the missing stage but Postmaster Fleming discredited such a hare-brained theory with, "Searcy would never do a stunt like that and I'll bet my bottom dollar on it!"

"He's still human," Tuscarora Jack offered, "and subject to human impulses. If you happen to remember Joe what's his name who carried mail from Winnemucca to Denio, Oregon was also a fine fellow and look what happened there. Him and the mail sack disappeared when he got wise there was cash in that mail sack. Only five hundred dollars, too, and here Searcy may have known there was several thousand in his sack."

"Still won't believe it of Fred," Fleming defended. At that moment a new arrival had something to offer that not only shed light on the stage but deepened the mystery. "Now, that's damn funny," he said. "I happened to be talking with old Lady Dexter and she mentioned seeing the stage go by her house just when the storm hit us and she says Searcy had a passenger beside him."

At this revelation his audience could only look at one another in open-mouth wonder. After much incredulous cussing Bill Ball was dispatched with the news bearer to Mrs. Dexter's house at the far end of town. When they returned their puzzled faces and words electrified their listeners.

"Then where the hell could he get to?" several asked as questions tumbled over each other. "Only a few hundred yards to go and four horses and a stagecoach disappears! That Dexter woman must be seeing things that *ain't!*"

However, this news set the town running here and there like a hill of ants that had been poked apart by inquisitive boys. Even though they wouldn't go so far as to call Mrs. Dexter a liar they had doubts about her vision or mind or both, and in minutes men with lanterns were scouring the snow covered path the stage would have to travel that short distance to the Post Office.

"This whole thing is screwy," they decided and were on the point of heading for the Dexter home and "have it out with her" when a horse's sneeze off in the willows drew them hurrying in that direction. There, they found the lead team tied to a willow clump and crumpled on the foot boards in front of the seat was the body of driver Fred Searcy. A bullet had entered the back of the skull and appeared to have emerged near the right eye and in the blood soaked frozen snow on the dash they found a mushroomed bullet judged to be of 32-20 calibre. In moving the body, a 32-20 Colt (a popular model of the day) was found shoved beside the left waist band of the driver's overalls. His heavy, blood caked overcoat with a wide belt around it, for warmth, had prevented any defense of himself if there had been any suspicion in his mind of foul play.

It took but a glance for the awed and saddened men to piece together events. Somewhere along the Willow bordered stream the killer, probably known to Searcy, had hitched a ride. Either that or had taken advantage of the storm and boarded the stage from the rear unseen by the driver. So ran conjectures. Yet, there was Mrs. Dexter's statement that *two* men were sitting on the seat when the stage had passed her house while it was still light and before spitting snow flakes had turned into a raging blizzard. No shot had been heard and why prop up a dead man and drive almost into the heart of town with the body? "This whole thing is gettin' crazier by the second!" Bill Ball exclaimed.

In untying the team large footprints were found where the willows had shed the force of the drifting snow. Later, the slashed — open leather mail pouch was accidently kicked from under the snow near a small bridge that spanned the stream. It took no "Sherlock" to deduce that the murderer was headed for the opposite side of town from that of the stage, giving mute testimony that the killer was still in town. Frank Leonard took charge and gave orders. "One of us must ride like hell to Rogerson, Idaho or straight south for Elko and get word to Sheriff Harris. Some of us better stand guard at the stage and road. With only one way out of here it's a cinch we've got a murdered in camp!" Bill Ball, having a fine saddle horse with his freight team, volunteered and in moments was crowding his mount through the night.

Sheriff Harris was a methodical man, loved by the general public and admired even by those he had arrested and brought to trial. His cosmopolitan nature allowed him to know practically everyone in his bailiwick and though he never jumped at conclusions, once he arrived in Jarbridge he listened to those who had already uncovered marks and objects that pointeda finger of suspicion at a man working in one of the mines. One thread of evidence lay in the track of a large dog beneath the stage coach and near the bridge where the first class mail pouch had been discovered.

Such a dog was known to the town folks as a "hobo," belonging to no one yet a friend to everybody. Now, folks recalled seeing the dog tagging along with a certain miner of late and this miner had an oversize foot such as the prints found by the tethered team. Aside from these damaging marks the miner was in disfavor in the camp over "jumping" a mining claim and cabin.

When the year's assessment work isn't done by midnight of December 31st, it became open season for claim jumping seconds after the midnight deadline. This is the law in most mining districts. But the owner had been able to prove his assessment work *had* been more than met and the claim

Continued on page 56

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GOLD FEVER! in the WEST

UNCLE SAM'S MADE IT LEGAL FOR YOU TO OWN GOLD BARS AND COINS - AND EVERYBODY'S RUSHING TO THOSE OLD TREASURE SPOTS FOR A SECOND LOOK

by Bob Wolenik

If you thought that gold rush of 1849 turned the west upside down and inside out, wait until you see the gold rush of 1975! That's right, in case you haven't heard, Uncle Sam has made it legal once again for all of us to own gold and the search for it has begun at a feverish pitch.

Gold!

The very sound of the word has been enough to turn men's minds into sawdust, make them eat sand and drink mud, and sell their future, all to get the remarkable metal in their hands. Of course, it's always been legal to dig for gold and to have the *unrefined* metal around. But back on April 5, 1933 President Franklin D. Roosevelt in the dark days of the Great Depression made it illegal to own *gold bullion*. This was to help America get out of its economic problems and there are many who say it did. (It's interesting, isn't it, that now they're legalizing the ownership of gold bullion as we are going into what appears to be another period of hard times.)

Collector coins and jewelry were exempt from the ban, at first, but most people didn't realize this and back in 1933 everyone brought in all their gold coins and traded them for greenbacks. Or at least most people did. Some hid their coins in the ground. If any of our old-time readers did this, it's time now to dig up that treasure. And treasure it certainly is. Even if the coins are of no numismatic (that's a fancy word that means collector) value, they are sure to be of bullion value. Back in 1933 the official and unofficial price of gold was set at $35 an ounce and as this is being written the price of gold today on the London market is just topping $190 an ounce! That's a heap of profit for anyone who has any old coins of gold lying around.

But, you may ask, what happened to make the government change its mind. Well, that would take a lot of explaining and I mean by the government itself! I'll take the easy way out and describe the actual events, not the motives.

After many years of insistance by "gold-bugs," that is senators and Congressmen who wanted U.S. citizens to have the right to own the precious metal, Congress passed a bill allowing private ownership and President Ford signed it into law just one week after he took office. The law said that if not sooner, private ownership of gold became effective no later than December 31, 1974. Well this is the January issue of WESTERN you're reading and that law should be in effect about now. Maybe you can tell I'm hedging my words a bit. I've got an old Missouri mind and I don't believe anything till I've seen it. There is just a chance that those old boys in Washington cooked up a surprise and by the time you read this they could've passed another law repealing the first one! (In order to get this magazine printed and distributed I'm writing this at the end of November. Of course, if such a law had been passed you'd read about it in the papers. There'd be such a hoohaw over it the sound would probably never die down!)

Nonetheless, assuming everything went according to Hoyle, it should be legal for you to own gold in any form by now and that's producing the great search. All those gold bars and coins that have been overlooked for years are getting a second look for.

Will any be found? Probably! It's often been said that there's still more gold in the ground than all the amount that's been taken out. And I would wager a good portion of what's still there has been put back — buried for safe keeping and then lost. For a good example, check the next story, "Mehlhorn's overlooked gold." I could only guess what his over $20,000 in lost coins would be worth today, but you can be sure it would run into six figures!

If you're the type who likes to find the unfound gold be sure you check out the new clues to the Adams diggings, the story which starts on page 8. To round out the issue, we've got other kinds of gold stories. There's Ezra Meeker's strange way of getting it that starts on page 42 and the Valley of Death on page 30 (where people lost their lives, not their gold).

If you're a gold bug, now's the time for you to shine. But watch out! With the gold fever that's hitting the west you may not find much elbow room at the diggings!

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Stephen Mehlhorn – when he accidentally caused the death of his son, Noah, he also lost the location of his treasured gold pieces.

Noah Mehlhorn, left, found his father's hidden cache, and rehid it, refusing to tell the location of the new burial place.

The barn still stands in which the tragic fight between father and son took place.

Photos supplied by author

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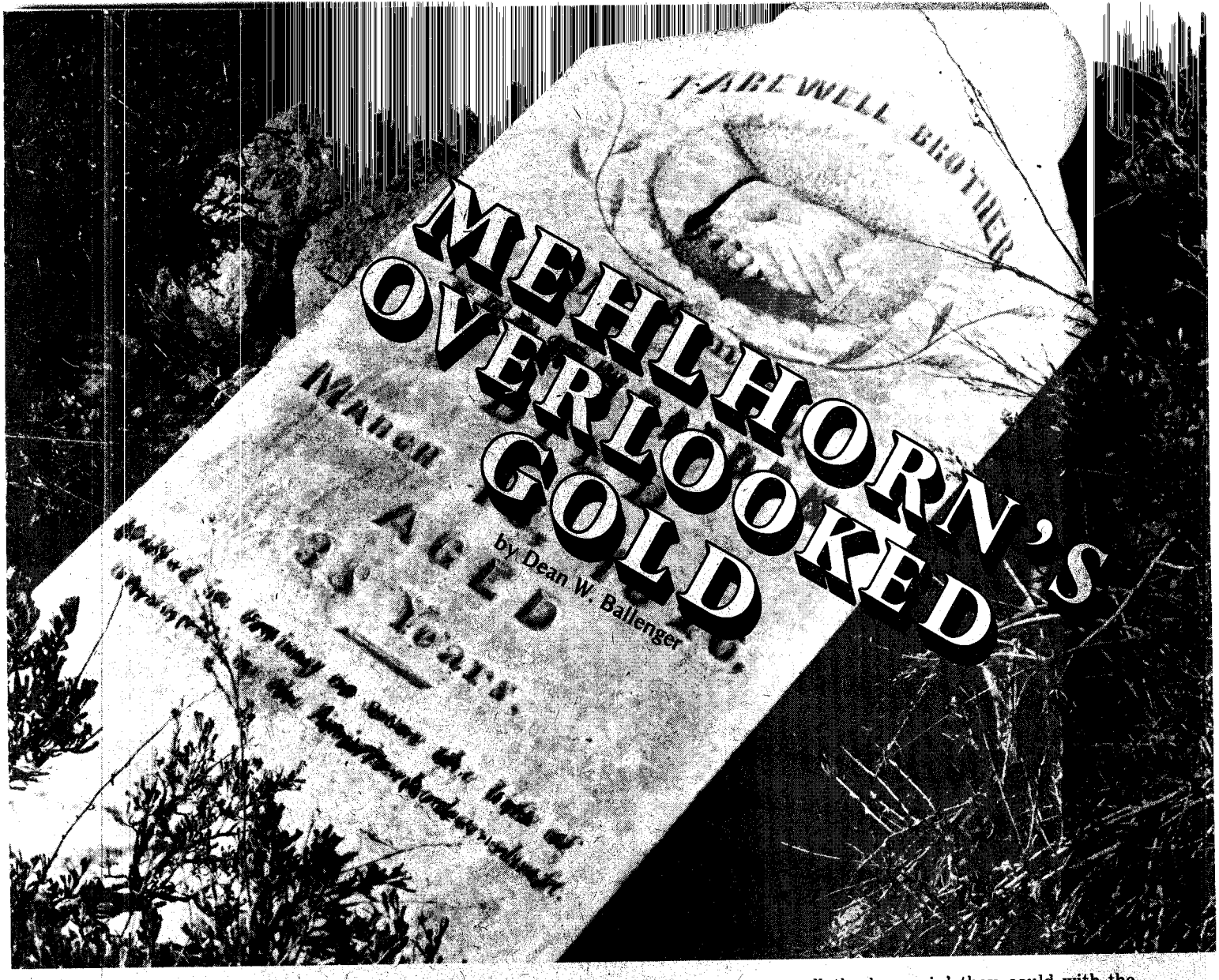

2445 Gold Pieces Concealed By His Youngest Son - And He Never Found Them

Stephen Mehlhorn had a good thing going. He was raising hogs on his South Platte bottoms homestead and selling them, butchered, for cash money to the commissary officer at Fort Sedgwick, one of the chain of outposts whose garrisons protected immigrants and settlers in the South Platte valley.

Additionally, Mehlhorn, who had been a farmer in Hamilton County, Ohio, his hard-working wife Sophia and their four sons, sold salt and fresh pork and smoked hams to meat-hungry immigrants on the Julesburg-Denver cutoff of the Overland Trail.

Mehlhorn didn't trust banks. He kept the proceeds from his hog business in a cache on his farm, changing it from time to time and telling only Sophia and three of the boys its new location.

He didn't tell his other son, Noah, who was 'short-brained,' having been afflicted at birth by a midwife whom, Mehlhorn often said, "didn't know no more'n a grasshopper about birthin'."

So Noah, mentally retarded, was the family's workhorse, doing the unpleasant chores and not knowing that these tasks ought to be shared with his more fortunate brothers.

The family prospered and Mehlhorn promised each of his sons, except Noah, "a thousand dollars gold and a good horse" when they struck out on their own, a time which was coming because the boys, Penton, Adam and Case, were feeling the urge for wives and spreads of their own, Penton being 24 and Adam and Case not far behind.

In the meantime, Mehlhorn, whom acquaintances said was a hard-bitten money grubber, kept the boys home and working by letting them go to Julesburg on Saturday nights to do all the hoorayin' they could with the dollar he allowed each of them.

Noah rarely accompanied his brothers. Most of the time he stayed home and did their chores as well as his own.

After the family's noon meal on Saturday, June 11, 1870, while Mehlhorn was doling out the dollars for his three 'bright' sons' regular weekly hoorayin', Noah, who was 19, said, "I found your gold, pa . . . and I betcha can't guess where I hit it!"

Mehlhorn and Sophia and the boys stared at Noah with uneasy astonishment. Then Mehlhorn said, "Now, Noah, spose you show me where you put it and I'll let you go to town with your brothers."

Noah, the center of attention for the first time in his life, said he wasn't going to tell.

Mehlhorn told Noah he'd give him two dollars to spend in town. "Nope," Noah said, grinning broadly.

"Five dollars!"

"Nope," Noah repeated, enjoying his new status as somebody important.

Mehlhorn lunged for his son.

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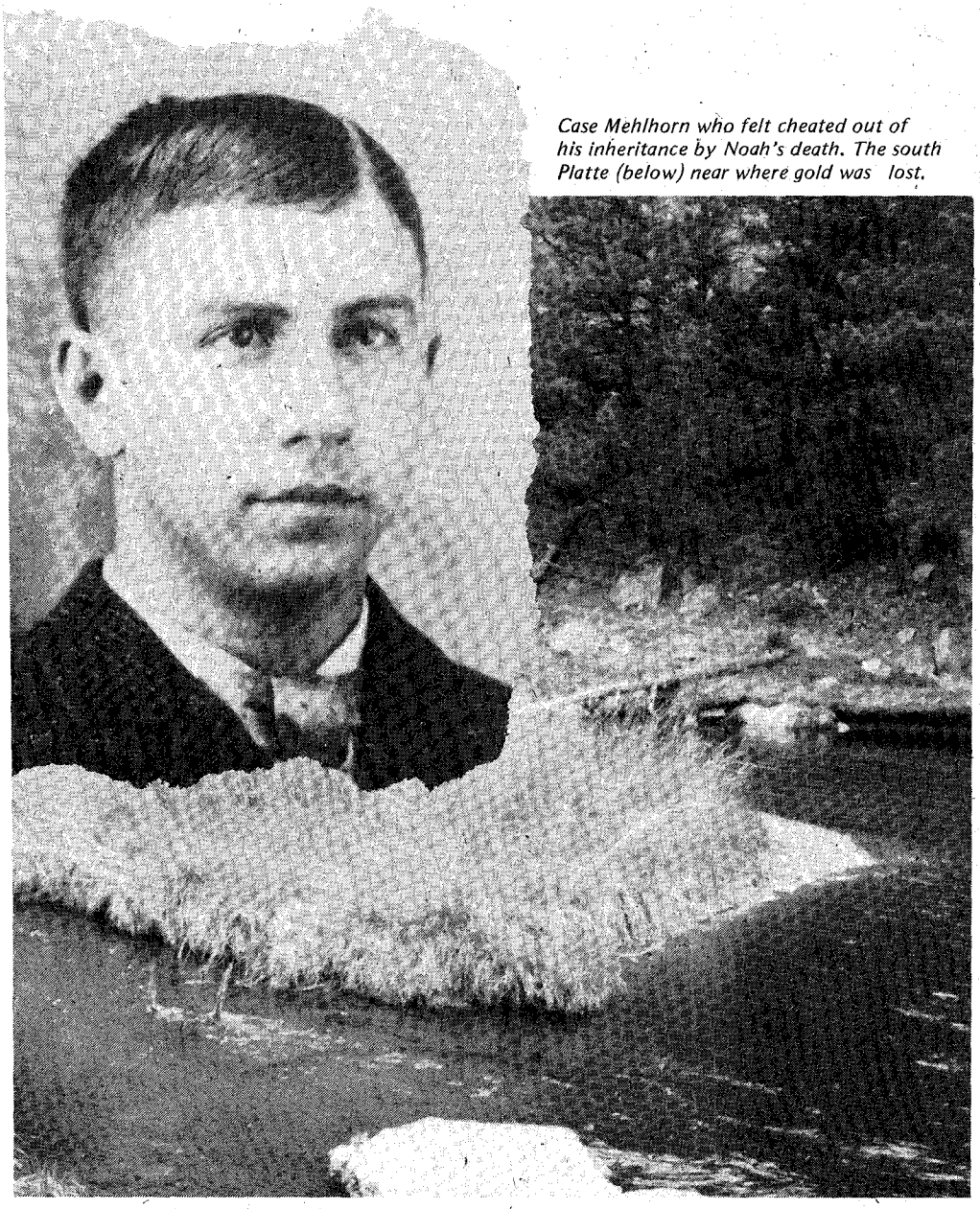

Case Mehlhorn who felt cheated out of his inheritance by Noah's death. The south Platte (below) near where gold was lost.

MEHLHORN'S GOLD

Noah, pursued by his now-panicked father, who was followed by Sophia and the other boys, ran into the hay barn. "One of us boys got at each place he could escape from," Case said later. "We thought we had him trapped and pa could whup him into telling where he had hid our money if he wouldn't tell by himself."

"I ain't gonna tell," Noah said, standing up to his father for the first time in his life, perhaps because he realized that he could continue his status as the family's center of attention if he kept his secret.

Mehlhorn bellowed that he'd whup the truth out of Noah. He swooped up a mule whip and swung its popper toward the youth.

Quickly Noah stepped back. Mehlhorn went toward him and swung the whip once more. Shielding his face with his arms, the youth stepped back again. He stumbled over a harness strap that had been tossed onto the barn's dirt floor.

He fell backward. An arm outstretched to break his fall dislodged a pitchfork that had been racked, tines up, against the barn's far side.

The pitchfork fell forward, its tines impaled Noah's back, below his shoulders, and the momentum of his backward fall drove them deeply into his lungs.

"He stood there looking at us, his eyes big and wide like it hurt something fierce," Case, who was to become a commission buyer for a Denver packing house, said years afterward, "and then ma started whooping and blaming pa and pa told her to shut up so's he could ask Noah where he'd hid the money before it was too late."

Mehlhorn pulled the pitchfork's tines out of his son's back and laid him on a pile of hay. He pleaded with the dying youth to reveal the cache.

"I ain't gonna do it now," Noah said, barely audible, blood dribbling out his nostrils and the corner of his mouth, ". . 'cause you hurt me."

Mehlhorn said something his family had never heard him say. He said, "Please . . . ! Please tell me, Noah!"

"Noah wouldn't do it," Case said. "Then, suddenly, it hit us other boys that we wouldn't never get our thousand dollars leaving money if Noah up and died without telling where he'd his pa's gold. So we started begging him to tell."

"Nope . . . ." Noah moaned. "You let pa hurt me so I ain't tellin'."

Those, Case reported, were Noah's last words. "He hadn't any more than got them said than he reared up and his eyes liked to popped out of his head. Then he fell back and everybody could see he was dead."

The family, Sophia weeping and the sons and their father looking like they'd just been mule-kicked, stared down at the corpse. Then Mehlhorn said, "Where do you boys spose he would a hid it?"

"None of us had any idea," Case said later. "Places we would have hid it, if it had been us, wasn't likely to be where Noah hid it, him doing everything different than anybody else."

"I reckon we're just gonna have to start lookin'," Mehlhorn said.

"Spose we can't find it?" one of the boys wondered.

"We gotta find it!" Mehlhorn bellowed. "We just gotta! Lord, we got years a hard work and you boy's leavin' money tied up in that gold!"

The Mehlhorns didn't wait until after they laid Noah away, Editor Floyd Frasier complained in the weekly Julesburg True Teller, before they started searching for the gold. In the uninhibited prose of the era Frasier wrote in his edition of Thursday, June 16, 1870. "It is surprising that they took time from their frantic digging to attend the funeral services so eager do they seem to find the gold the deceased boy cached away in the prank that caused his ill-tempered father to bring about his departure."

News of the lost money soon spread over the little frontier community. Men and boys from Julesburg and the other settlements, and off-duty soldiers from Fort Sedgwick, came to the Mehlhorn spread with shovels and picks.

Mehlhorn told them to 'git.' His farm was private property, he bellowed. "Besides, if you found it, it wouldn't be your'n to keep!"

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True WESTERNERS

REAL STORIES OF THE OLD WEST TOLD BY THOSE WHO WERE THERE

A Public Hanging

by Lela Briston Tadlock
Columbus, Kansas

Papa was thirteen years old when he attended his first and only public hanging. It was in the little town of Evening Shade, Arkansas, in the fall of 1875. A public hanging was a special event in the Arkansas hills at this period of time. People came from miles around, in ox wagons, on horseback, in horse drawn vehicles and on foot to witness the event.

Paw, as Papa, his brothers and sisters called their father, was chief deputy sheriff of the county. His wife had died four years earlier and most of the nine children were grown. Papa was one of the younger ones.

The normal population of Evening Shade was about 250 persons but on the day of the hanging it was estimated that between 3,500 and four thousand people were there to witness the bizarre affair.

Papa said that he had never seen so many armed men as were around the gallows that day. The platform on which the gallows had been set up was roped off on all sides. The condemned man had spent the night in the tiny jail at Evening Shade, under heavy guard. The pastor of a church in Batesville in which he had become affiliated while in jail there, spent the night with him.

The crowd became restless and pressed against the ropes as the condemned man was brought to the platform. One especially aggressive character, who was known to be a leader in lawlessness, loudly defied the guard until John Wesley Bristow poked his long gun against his stomach and ordered him to stand back. Papa said that the crowd was getting very loud until Kemp mounted the platform and with the sheriff's permission, began to speak. The people became quiet and listened, attentively to every word.

Kemp was tall, dark and fine looking. His black hair and mustache was very neat and he wore a nice "store bought" suit. He stood straight and tall and looked around the crowd as he told his life story. He said that he was the son of a fine old Tennessee family, that he had fallen into sin at an early age and that drinking and gambling had caused his downfall. He stated further that he held no malice toward anyone, that God had forgiven his sins and that he was ready to meet his Maker. He admonished the young men to honor their parents and to refrain from the sins which had caused his downfall. He expressed the opinion that he had been tried fairly, although that someone else was as guilty of the murder as he was.

A witness to the hanging.

He fell on his knees before the minister who had spent the night with him. The minister placed his hands on his head and prayed fervently, commending Kemp's soul to God. After the minister's prayer, the condemned man repeated the Apostles' Creed and the Lord's Prayer, then arose and shook hands with the sheriff who was to take his life. Papa said that the sheriff took out his handkerchief and blew his nose after the handshake. The black mask was adjusted, the rope tied around Kemp's neck and the trap was sprung.

Papa said that women in the crowd screamed and some fainted as the body swung in the air. In ten minutes, Joseph Kemp was pronounced dead by the attending physician. The body was taken to Batesville for burial but nobody today knows the location of his grave. He had requested that his family, especially his mother, not be allowed to learn of his fate. As far as is known, this request was carried out.

Papa said that his skin had tingled

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A PUBLIC HANGING

as he had listened to the parting words of the man and as he had observed the courageous attitude of one so soon to be hanged. The events of the day made a lasting impression on him as a 13-year-old boy. The man's speech and his bravery as he faced death were enlarged upon and talked about for months and even years afterward in the community.

Papa looked sad and thoughtful as he finished telling us the story of the hanging. "It was an awful thing," he mused. "If my mother had been living, she would have never let my sisters and myself be there. I would not allow you children to go to such a thing. It was a very wise thing the state legislature did, when it put a stop on public hangings.

Rabid Dog 1895

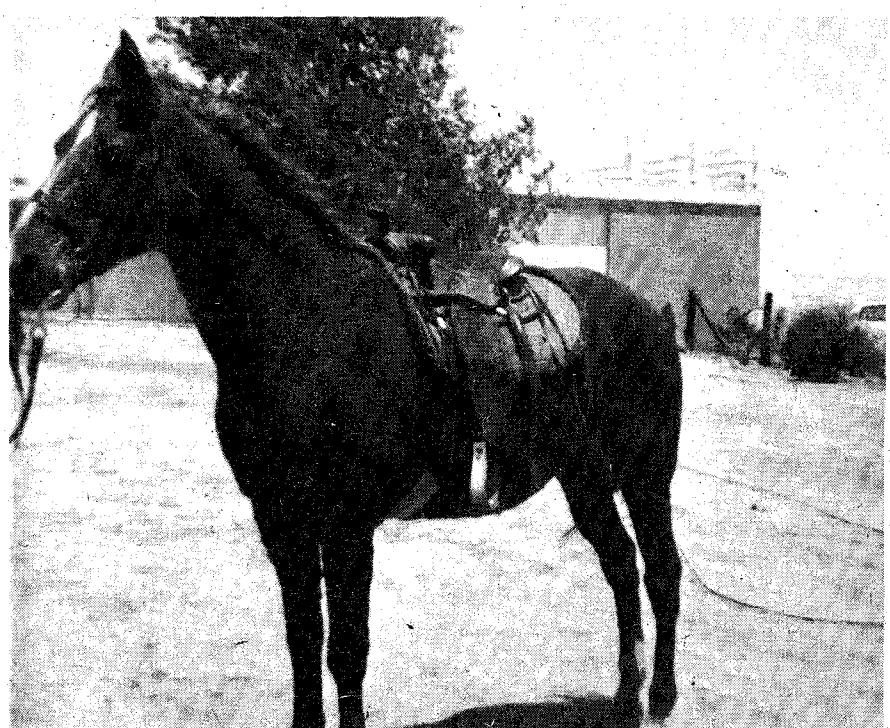
by Lonnie Williams
Hesperia, California

There is quite a difference in the way we lived seventy years ago and today. I remember using the old wash board. And the wash pot. We did not have the conveniences of today.

My Grandfather was a lover of dogs, and horses. One day J.K. Pierce came by with his dogs to go hunting with my grandfather (Jake Hedrick). One of the dogs got into a fight with my grandfather's dog. And my grandfather picked his dog up and threw him into the pool, and was bitten by his own dog. He didn't worry about it as there was not a rabid dog scare at the time. His oldest son was scratched on the arm.

Later the dog began to act weird. So he tied him to a tree. He hated to kill a faithful dog. But he soon saw he had to as he had bitten a cow that went mad, and had to be destroyed. The head was sent Austin for observation. Of course, the report came back as rabid. By that time it had been seven days and he had begun to go blind when he went to get a drink. So he and his son Lee started to Sulphur Springs Texas to take the treatment. In those days all they had was a Mad stone taken from a Deer and soaked in milk. If it stuck on the wound you were rabid. It stuck on my grandfather for over an hour. It drew out the poison which turned the milk green. It did not stick on Lee.

They had a hard time getting to town as the roads were bad and they had to travel by wagon. On the way a horse got sick at Dike, Texas. He tried to borrow one from a man to go into town. But the man refused, as he didn't believe his story. Horses were like gold and was their livelihood. So they got on another horse and rode the fifteen miles to town to get medicine for the sick horse. He did and finally got into town. But it was too late for him. The poison had gotten all through his system by that time. However, some of the poison was drawn out and he did not go mad. But had a headache for a year. And was unable to work. A daughter was born the next year and when she was nine months old he died. She lived another six months. They did not know what she died with, but supposed she had some of the poison in her system.



Williams' show and parade horse.

Linnie williams with her own dog about the time she wrote the story.

Nabors Pane's Counterfeit Uprising

by Carrol Cogburn
Ringold, Okla.

The old Indian (I swear his name was Nabors Pane) raised his hand in greeting as he came into the shade beneath the front porch of Tom Cogburn's, Grocery and General Store.

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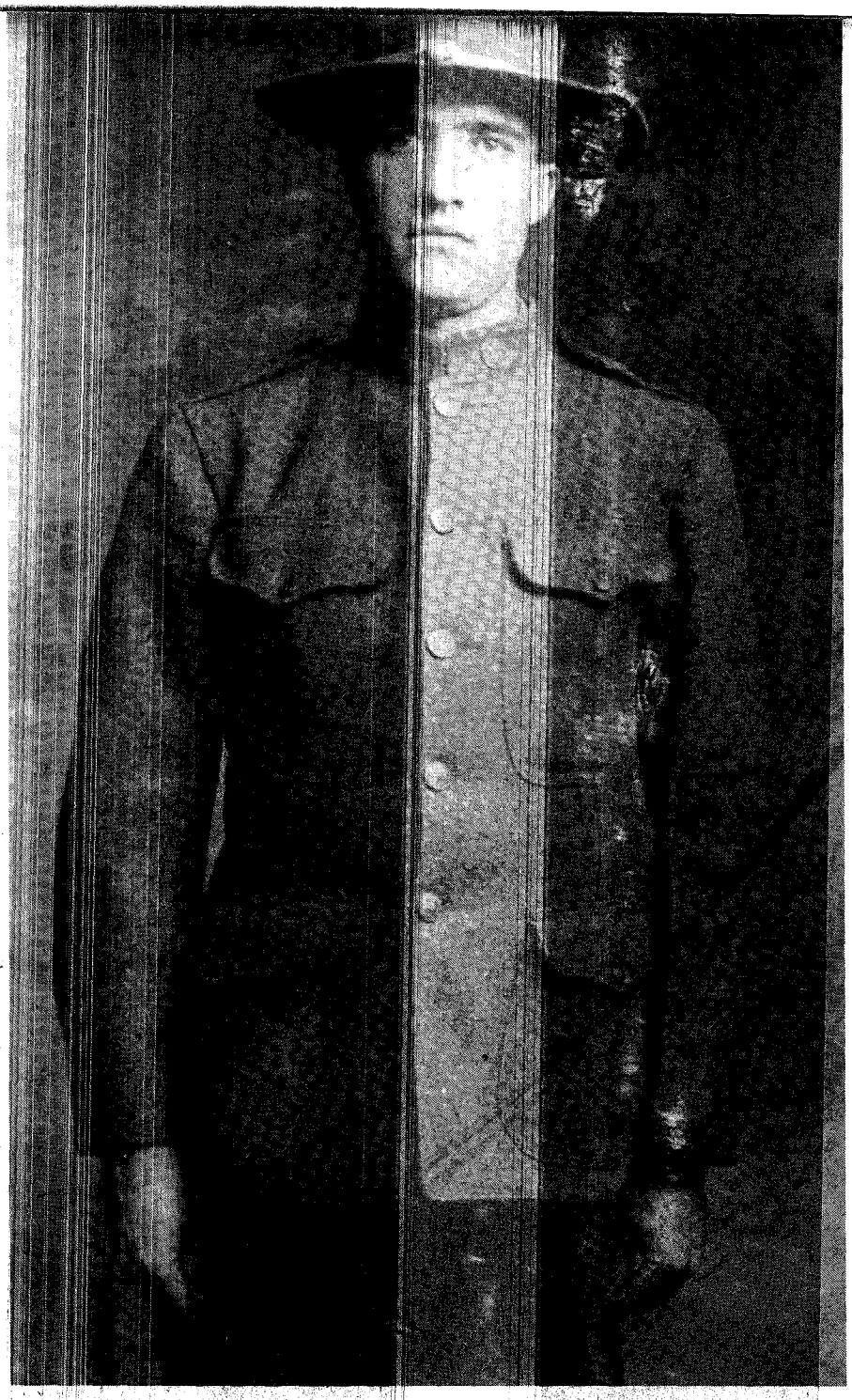

Tom (left) and Howard (above) Cogburn. The incident took place in Tom's General Store in Rufe, Oklahoma.

At that time, Tom's store and home were Rufe, Okla., Tom, his fifteen year old son Howard, and Howard's eighteen year old cousin Roy Hill were relaxing in the shade and they all nodded to return the greeting. Roy, who was visiting from Norman, Arkansas, did not know the ancient Indian but the old man was a familiar sight to Tom and Howard.

The old Indian walked up to Tom and held out his hand, palm up. In his hand he held a pile of silver coins of mixed values. This was his way of paying for a purchase, each purchase paid for one at a time. He had no idea how to count the white man's money so he trusted Tom to select the correct amount.

Tom knew what he wanted even though Nabors was never heard to speak a word of English. With a few Choctaw words and hand signs he made himself understood. After Tom selected a nickel from the handful of coins Nabors replaced the rest in his pocket. Then he trudged back midway in the store and stopped in front of the kerosene refrigerator. As customary he chose a cold strawberry soda-pop. He took the soda-pop outside and, squatting on his heels, slowly drank the cold liquid.

When he had finished his soda-pop and made his purchases he would take Tom by the arm and led him outside where, by pointing at a certain place in the sky and a few gutteral Choctaw words, he would indicate where the sun would be when he would return. He never failed to follow this procedure and he always returned at the appointed time. Nabors seemed to take this routine seriously and would follow it to the letter each time he visited the store.

This particular summer day the old Choctaw seemed to be in good spirits as he drank the strawberry pop down to the bottom of the bottle. Tom took a look at Nabors, Howard and Cousin Roy and decided this was a fine time for a little fun.

Taking the Choctaw aside while Howard and Cousin Roy were occupied elsewhere, Tom outlined his plan with many hand signs and some Choctaw language. With a grin and a nod Nabors indicated that he understood. Wandering back in the store to look at the pictures on the canned goods he waited for Howard and Cousin Roy to return.

Nabors did not have long to wait. Howard and Cousin Roy had been looking at some horses in the corral out back and now they came back into the store. Cousin Roy was saying something to Tom about one of the horses when he was interrupted by a hair-raising scream from behind him.

Cousin Roy turned to find the docile old Indian transformed into a hideous-faced, knife weilding savage.

Continued on page 65

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THE GUNNESS

Belle Gunness Hacked Off Her Lovers' Heads And Planted Them In Her Garden!

by E.D. Ketchum

"What ever became of the men Belle Gunness killed?"

The old woman leered at the question her mad eyes rolling at some secret knowledge. "She fed 'em to the hawgs!" she chortled. The woman was an inmate of the Longcliff Hospital for the Insane at Logansport, Indiana. But at one time she had worked as housekeeper on the farm of Belle Gunness, variously known as the Hoosier

Belle Gunness

Jenny Olson – the child victim of Belle Gunness' mad acts.

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Monster, the Female Bluebeard, and the Queen of the Abattoir.

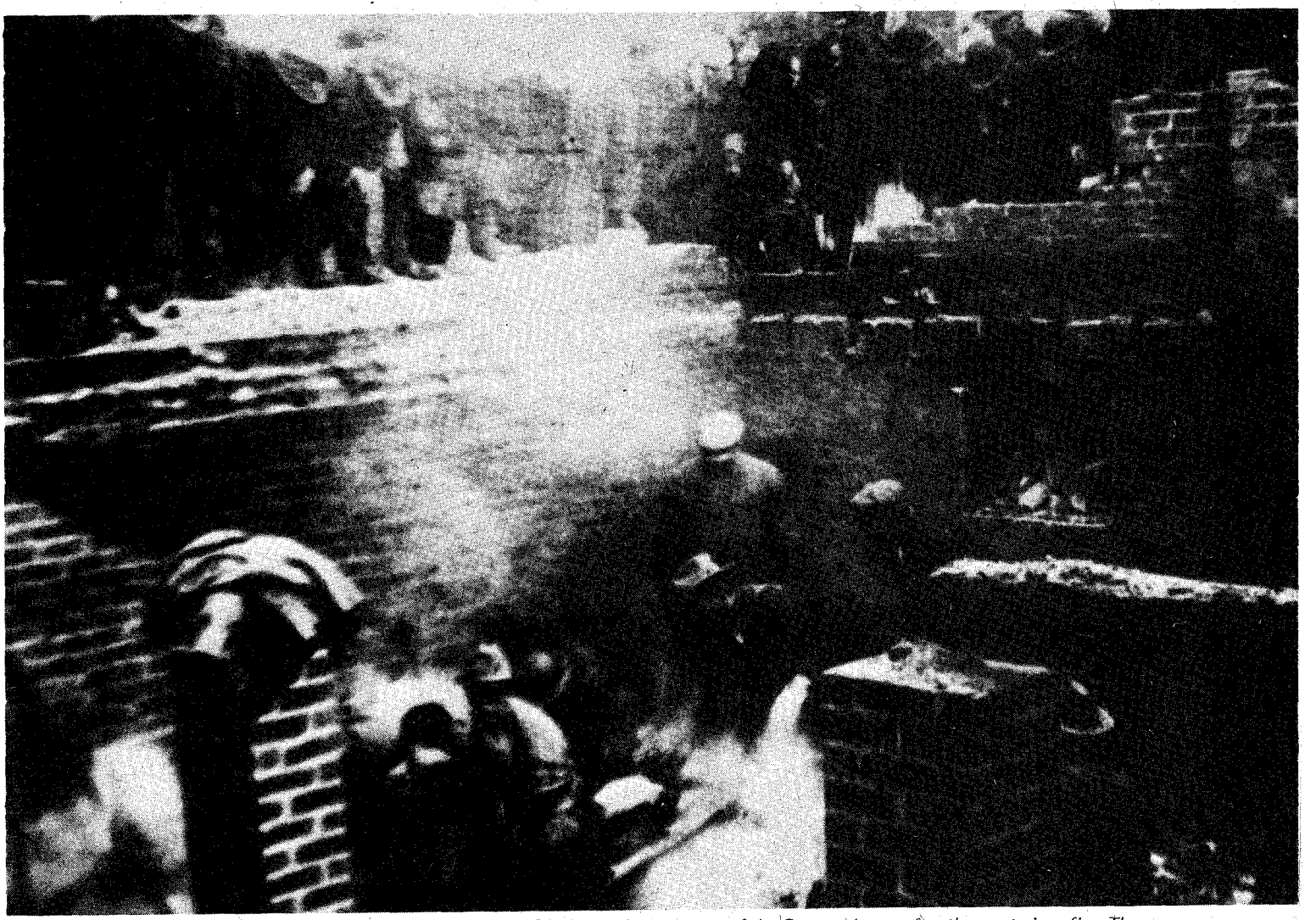
The perspective of 67 years gives no fourther insight into the mind of Belle Gunness than one might have had in 1908, or in the 1940's when that question was asked of the old crone at Logansport. On the surface, Belle murdered for money. And yet, she always worked hard, as hard as any man, and she lived frugally. What need did she have for so much money? Was she subject to the terror of financial insecurity? Did she, as many believed, derive enjoyment from the orgy of murder, the dismemberment of her victims?

Her early background gives no clue, since little is known about it. Her father was a gypsy sword swallower, her mother a tight-rope walker. Her maiden name was Brynhilde Poulsatter. She came to America from Selbe, Norway, in 1868, at the age of nine. Was she a happy child? Was the family poor? Perhaps her parents died when she was quite young? It is known that her sister, Mrs. Nellie Larson, sent the girl passage money to join her at her Chicago home.

Belle lived in an era when marriage provided the only safe, secure career for a woman. Perhaps she had

MONSTER

Photos supplied by author



A human head (left) with the teeth still intact - found in the remains of Belle's house.

Digging in the basement of the Gunness house after the mysterious fire. Three bodies were discovered where men are seen working – one, unidentified, was headless.

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to use devious means at first, in order to survive. She was no beauty, and probably in no great demand as a wife. She was a bit older than most brides of her century, 24, when she married Mads Sorénson. Whether it was a happy union is a matter for conjecture. When Belle first appeared in the northern Indiana town of LaPorte, in 1901, Mads had already met his maker, just one short year before.

Widow Sorenson was well-off financially. She had $8,000 in life insurance, and $5,000 from sale of the Austin, Illinois, home she and Mads had shared toward the end of their 17 years as man and wife. Her gold wedding band was inscribed "MS to JS Aug. 22, 1894," 11 years after her marriage. Perhaps Mads had not acquired sufficient capital to provide Belle with a wedding ring until then. But why the initials JS? Brynhilde, or Belle, as she was known — those names did not fit the initials. Could the "J" represent a title of endearment known only to Belle and Mads? Could it have meant Jezebel, contracted to Belle?

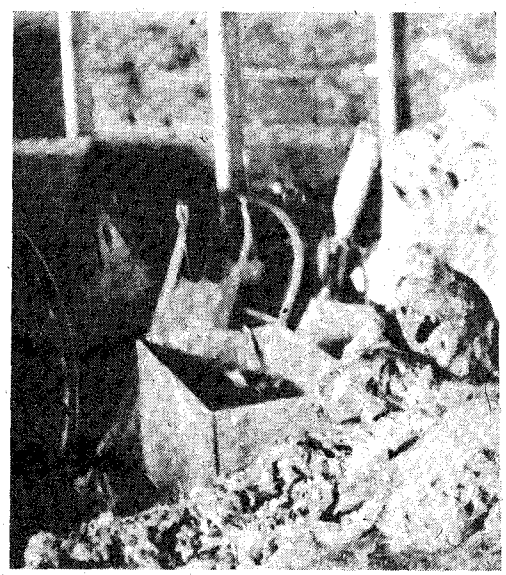
The "rugged" Mrs. Sorenson, as she has been described, was 5 ft. 7 inches tall, and weighed over 200 pounds. She was 42 when she settled on a 48-acre farm she bought on McClung Road, about a mile outside LaPorte. In addition to the two little Sorenson girls, Myrtle and Lucy, the house was home for young Jennie Olson, who had been left under Belle's supervision by her father, Antone Olson, with whom Belle had been acquainted in Illinois.

Although Mrs. Sorenson had a succession of hired men, she herself did much of the hard work on her farm. She milked the cows, pitched hay, tended the garden and chickens. She even butchered her own calves and pigs, and sold the meat to LaPorte merchants.

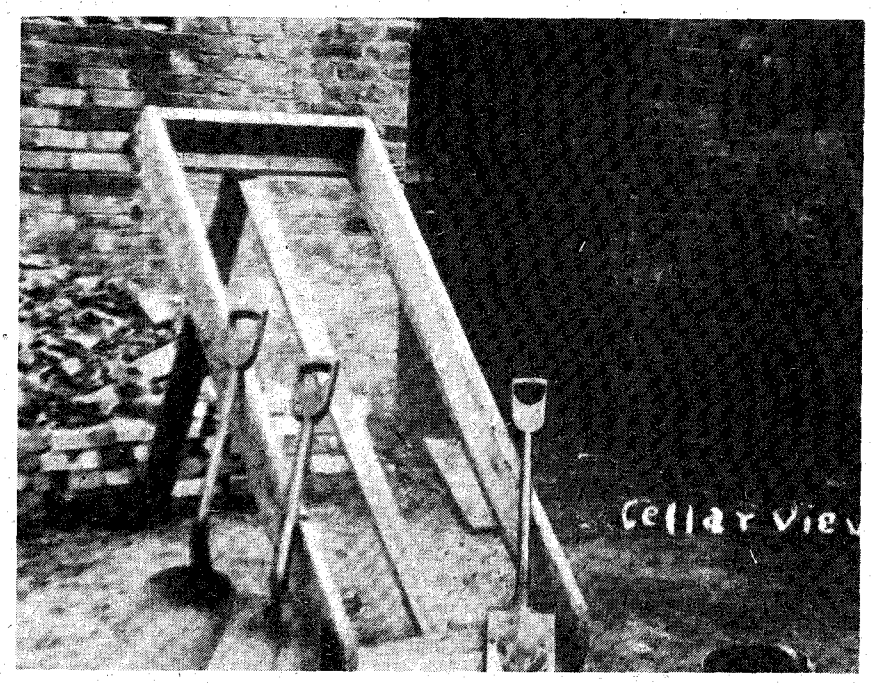
The Widow Sorenson kept mostly to herself. The only persons allowed inside her two-store farmhouse, besides her family, were the hired help. Even delivery men were refused admittance. They were awed by Mrs. Sorenson's brawn and strength. One swore that he saw Belle pick up a "three hunnert pound" upright piano and tote it inside the house. "Ay like music in home," was Belle's remark, in her still-thick Nordic accent.

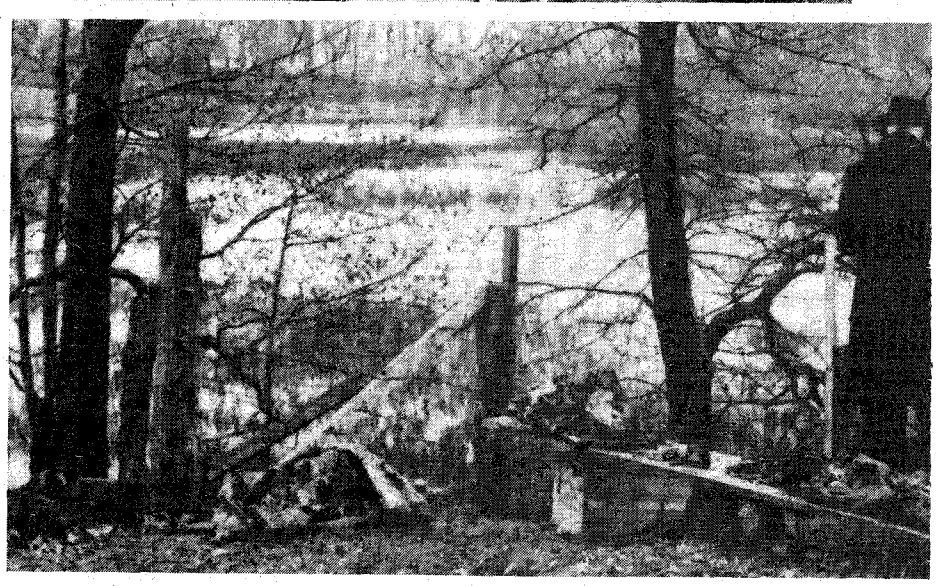
Less than a year after her arrival in LaPorte, Belle became the not-so-blushing bride of Peter Funness, also an immigrant from Norway. Now Belle sported another gold band, with the

Ray Lamphere — Belle's accomplice?



Bodies piled together waiting identification.





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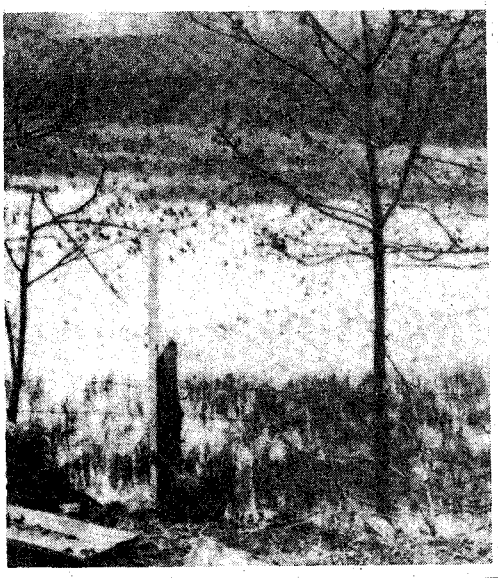
Belle and her children – Myrtle, Lucy and Phillip Sorenson (on her lap).

Box with fine wire screen (left) used by diggers to sift out the rubble after the tragic fire – bits of bones were found here.

The remains of Belle's garden after it had been dug up by the Sheriff's men. 20 bodies and parts of bodies found here.



inscription "PG to JS 3/5/95." Those peculiar initials, "JS" again. And the wedding took place in 1902. But then, the couple had known each other earlier in Illinois, for Peter was an acquaintance of the now-defunct Mads Sorenson.

The neighbors liked Peter Gunness as much as they disliked Belle. Peter was a happy-natured sort. But in December, scarcely seven months after the nuptials, Peter died.

Belle described to the LaPorte coroner how a sausage-grinder had fallen from a shelf, striking her husband a fatal blow on the head. The coroner felt the matter seemed a "little queer." In the absence of any real proof of foul play, the official decision was that poor Peter had died by accident.

The Widow Gunness continued living frugally, despite the $4,000 in life insurance she was now able to add to her bank account. In 1903, she either gave birth to a posthumous son of Peter Gunness, or took in one more foster child. She called him Phillip.

The many hired hands and housekeepers at the Gunness farm came and went. Some went quite unexpectedly. Whether any of the men were "extra friendly" with Belle, no one knows. Then in 1906, Belle welcomed to the farm Mr. John Moo, whom she introduced to curious neighbors as her cousin John. Moo, in reality, was a suitor of the not-so-fair Belle Gunness. (Belle's photograph shows her as a large-boned stocky woman, dressed plainly, her hair done in a severe Gibson Girl manner. She was less than plain of face — almost ugly — heavy and stupid in appearance. Yet, there was some strange attraction in the huge Norwegian woman, as later events proved.)

John Moo had been successful in business in Elbow Lake, Minnesota. A native of Norway, Moo had come to LaPorte in answer to Belle's advertisement in a "wedding bells" magazine. At age 50, he felt that fine clothes and money were no substitute for marital bliss, and after several letters to and from Belle, he came to claim a bride.

After spending a week at the farm, however, "Cousin John" was gone, quite suddenly. But he was shortly replaced by a Mr. George Anderson. George was also from Norway, by way of Tarkio in northwestern Missouri. He also had come to LaPorte through the medium of the "lonely hearts" ad of Belle Gunnesss.

George only stayed a few days. In the middle of the night, he was awakened by the pale light of a candle held in the hand of his intended, Belle. She was bent over him, staring into his face. George screamed at the look in the big woman's eyes. Belle ran, George ran, too — fast and far. "All in a cold sweat," he dressed in a hurry, and headed for the LaPorte railroad station and the first train back to Tarkio.

At night, Belle could often be seen puttering in her garden — a yard 50x75 feet, inside a wire fence eight feet tall. Belle kept the gate locked. She also locked the basement, except at butchering time.

Belle's hermit-like existence was a topic for gossip all over the area, and it was a surprise to see still another suiter appear at her door, another Norwegian. Belle seemed to have a penchant for men of her native land. Ole Budsberg had been a successful logger in Iola, Washington. He was about Belle's age, and had several sons, all grown. Ole was not a "trifler." Belle's matrimonial advertisement specifically stated "Triflers need not apply." No, Ole had come with $2,000 cash saved from his logging operations. Belle's ads also stated that she was a "lovable, hard-working widow" and that she was interested in someone to help pay off the mortgage on her farm. For this, she needed the help of a "kind and honest" man, Scandinavian, preferably Norwegian. Like the others before him, Ole fitted that description. Like the others, he also disappeared.

The following year, Andrew K. Helgelein joined Belle at her farm. Mr. Helgelein was a retired wheat farmer, originally from Norway, late of Aberdeen, South Dakota. His billfold bulged with $3,000 cash. Helgelein had exchanged the usual series of letters with Belle, who by now was quite proficient in the art of luring middle-aged lovers by means of the matrimonial journals.

Ray Lamphere, the hired man, was jealous of Helgelein. He and Belle had a falling-out. Lamphere packed and left for LaPorte. There he was said to be telling it around that he knew enough about Belle to insure him of a good living for years. But he reckoned without the inventive Belle.

The chatelaine of the McClung Road farmhouse had Lamphere arrested, charging that he was a menace to the public due to insanity. But after a brief hearing, he was adjudged sane. Free again, he returned to the farm to see Belle. Another quarrel ensued. Once more Belle had him arrested, this time for trespass. Lamphere paid the fine. Later, he may have called on the Widow Gunness again. Certainly he was still making provocative remarks about her. He told one local farmer that "Helgelein won't

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A VALLEY CALLED DEATH

by Peter John Kaltenbach

"Yea, Though I Walk Through The Valley of The Shadow of Death I Will Fear No Evil. . . " DID THE BIBLE HAVE THIS PLACE IN MIND?

Photos supplied by author

Only God knows for sure just how many peoply have perished in Death Valley. The mineral rich sands hold many secrets. Dying under a scorching desert sun is not a pleasant way to go. Death by thirst is even worse.

Ralph "Dad" Fairbanks, the Guardian of Death Valley, tells of his experiences with victims of thirst. In the space of 20 years, from 1910 to 1930, he rescued twenty-two men from death and found fifteen less fortunate, five of whom he buried on the spot.

He said "A man dying in the Desert from thirst is always loco. Everyone of 'em goes off his buzz wheel, tears off his shirt and starts to diggin. The fingers of every dead man and every thirst crazed fellow I've found in Death Valley were always torn and bleeding and with broken fingernails. Not one did I find, dead or alive with a shirt. And handling a man that's gone crazy with the thirst or heat is the same as handling any lunatic."

"With the first tase of water they go wild. Give em half a chance and they'll kill themselves drinking every drop of water they can get hold of. They're burning up inside and their heads are on fire. Every cell in them is yelling for water. Give 'em too much water and its the same as pouring water on a red hot stove. You'll ruin 'em if you try it. You have to get 'em moistened up and back to their senses gradually." Quoted from Death

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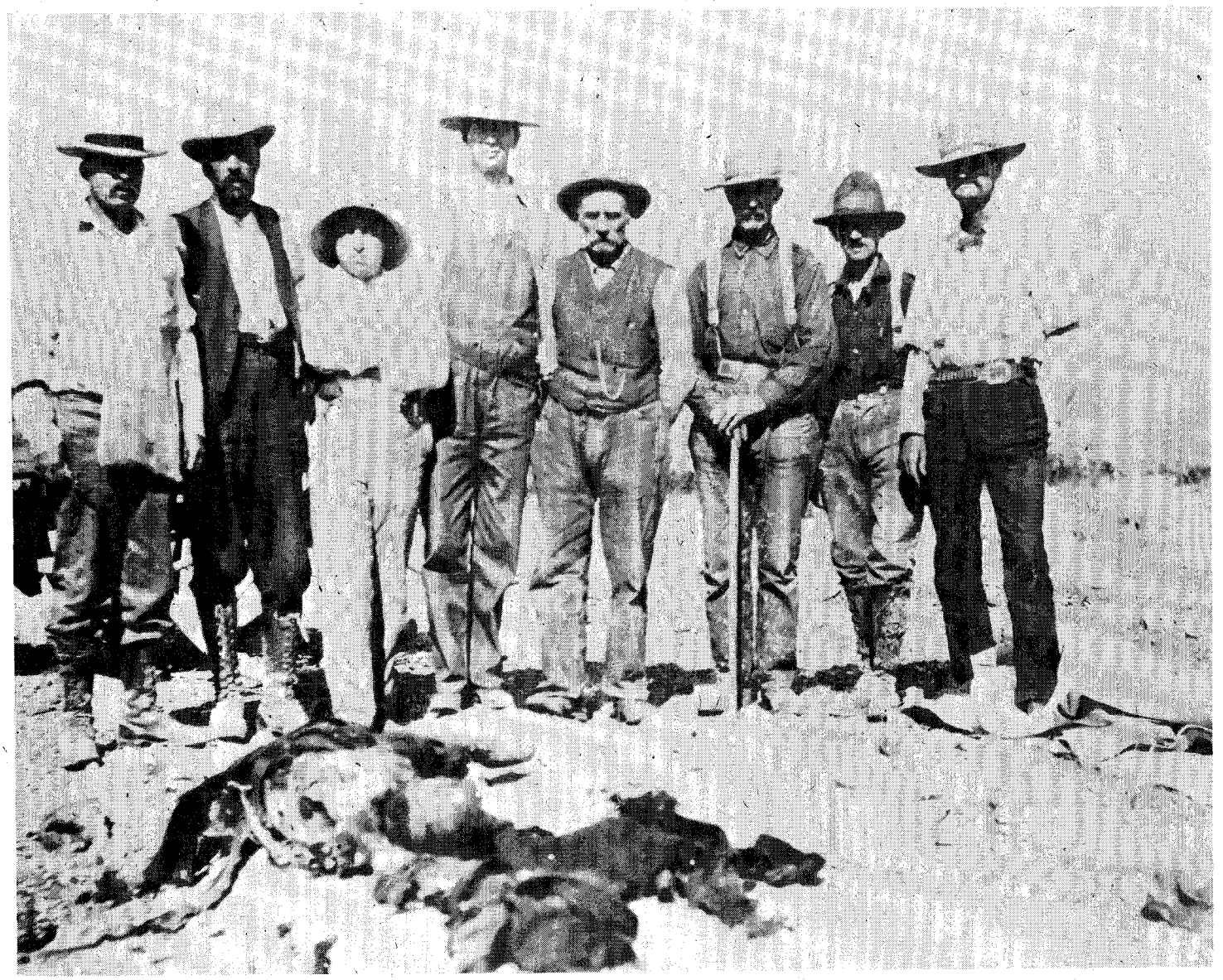

Many have died in the Valley - the remains on the ground are those of Emory Borge. Standing are those who sought to save him: (from left) Frank Thessie, Dr. McCdonald, Frank Fluger, Casey, Jimmy McConnell, Fred Heath, Henry Sellers and Dick Hibberd. Photo was taken in 1910. Below are animal bones on Valley floor.

The Valley was known for its merciless sun and 130 degree temperatures. The special coach (at left) had canvas covers to protect the driver and passengers. The horses, however, had to make the best of the gruelling journey unprotected.

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Barren hills, sand and scrub brush – photo courtesy Death Valley National Monument. Below, are two miners in 1908. Man on left was killed on Easter Sunday of that year by a drunken saloon owner.

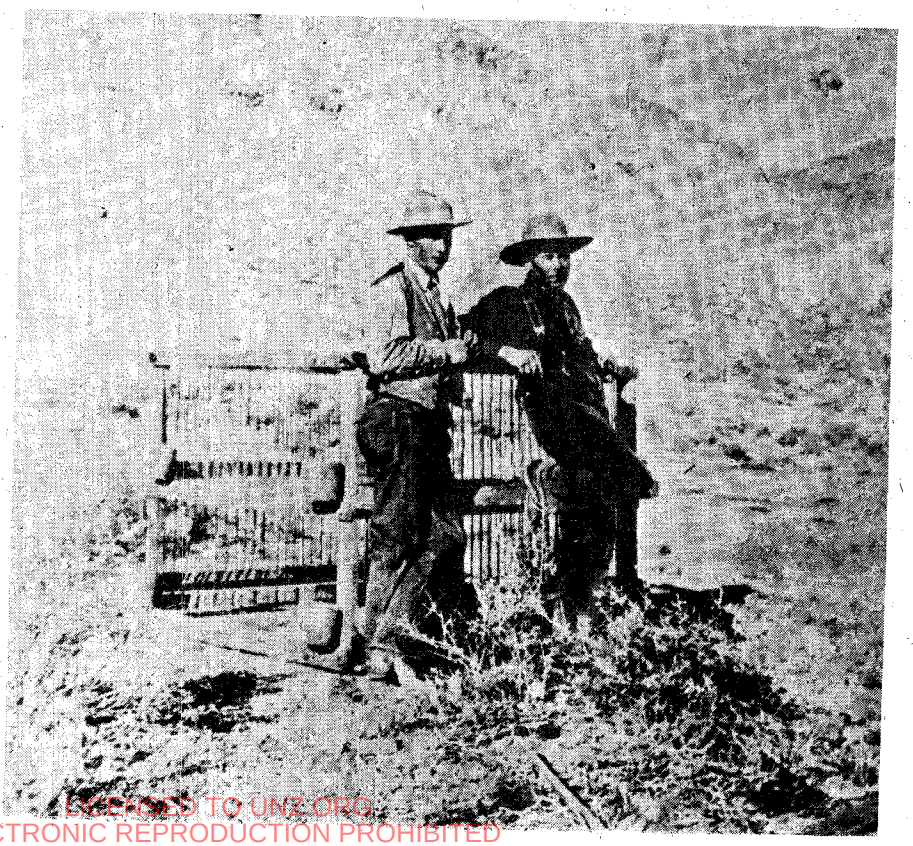
VALLEY OF DEATH

Valley's Victims by D. Cronkhite. Sagebrush press 1968.

Today, air conditioned cars speed down long unbroken ribbons of hiway to stop at air conditioned stores or motels at both Furnace Creek and Stove Pipe Wells. It seems hard to imagine someone dying outside. But given a hot summer day and a long walk, death could still be a possibility if the dangers are taken too lighly.

Death Valley was unknown to the world until the westward rush to the California gold fields. The Forty-niners stumbled into the region in 1849. The various emigrant parties, the Jayhawkers, the Bennetts, and the Brier Families suffered terribly from starvation, thirst, and total exhaustion. Only after these groups left the previously unnamed valley was it known as Death Valley.

Books for many years have told of the numerous emigrants which died during those first crossings of the valley. Historians have been able to deduce from diaries kept by those travelers that probably only one person died during that first crossing.



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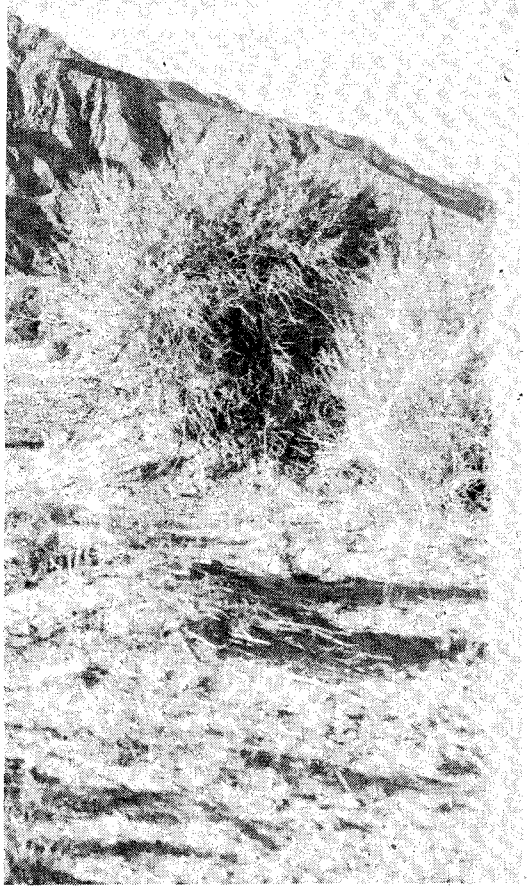

He was simply called Captain Culverwell who died at Mesquite Well in the Spring of 1850.

Others died after leaving the valley. Two men died near Searles Lake, southwest of Death Valley, near the present day town of Trona. The valley simply took too much out of them.

After the first emigrants left Death Valley, little if anything happened until 1861. Apparently the 49ers had discovered an outcropping of pure high grade silver in the Panamint Mountains during their crossing. Some of the party wanted to return and find the source. But, the silver was never seen again. One of the travelers took a sample of the silver and had it made into a gunsight for his rifle. The claim became known as the Lost Gunsight Mine.

In 1861, a group trying to find the Gunsight mine met a very tragic and violent end. S.J. George and his party of three found a promising deposit of minerals in the area of Wild Rose Canyon. They even went so far as to dig a short tunnel into the side of a cliff.

The local Indians, resenting the invasion of their hunting grounds killed the group. The tunnel became their grave.

March of the same year found a journalist, Hugh McCormack in the valley. He discovered a good spring of fresh water which became known as McCormack's Well. During his travels in the Valleys south end, he found the skeleton of a woman, partially wrapped in an old calico dress. The remains had been buried in a shallow grave, but the ever prying fingers of the wind had uncovered them.

Who was she? Did she die during the crossing of the 49er's? Perhaps more than one emigrant may have died during the trek of 1850.

Any start of a rush for gold and silver signalled the influx of many people unfamiliar with the ways of the desert. In 1880, Isidore Daunet and a group of friends attempted to cross Death Valley on their way to Arizona. They started at the mile high mining camp in the Western Panamints, Panamint City. This was a wide open town, lusty and violent.

The Daunet group left the relatively cool mountain town and descended into literal Hell. Traveling beneath a scorching summer sun, it didn't take them long to realize their water supply was woefully inadequate. The cruel sapping heat began to take its toll. Three members of the group died and the others barely made it to safety, including Daunet.

Daunet had discovered Borax on the floor of the valley. Returning later, he established the Eagle Borax Works, not far from Bennett Wells.

In 1883, the New Harmony Borax Work, inaugurated the 20 mule teams to haul the mineral out of the valley. A road had to be built through some of the roughest terrain in the world. The Devil's Golf Course, a mass of jagged salt pinnacles, would present a challenge to even a modern day road builder with his bulldozer and tractors. Can you imagine using sledgehammers to construct a road?

John R. Spears, writing in his book, "ILLUSTRATED SKETCHES OF DEATH VALLEY, (1892)" best describes the situation:

". . . and so the workman went over the marsh where the crust seemed to be the thickest and sounded it with sledge hammers. They found the crust was a mixture of salt and sand. Eventually, a route was decided upon. The road was then graded, and probably for the first time in the world, a road of this length was graded exclusively with sledge hammers."

"It was made across a stretch of solid salt some eight miles wide."

"Judging that the crust would sustain the weight of the wagons, the workman swung their sledge hammers, day after day, until they had beaten down these pinnacles into a smooth pathway some six feet wide. It was perhaps the most laborious engineering work ever done in the country, for the climate, and the location far from civilized inhabitants, combined to retard the efforts of the workmen."

"As one enters the easterly end of this road, two unmarked graves are seen in the salt crust near the track. They are graves of unknown men who died here from the heat, and after the fashion of the country, were buried where they fell."

From 1884 to 1889, Death Valley became known world-wide for its mineral wealth. Borax had become a much sought after mineral for use in the making of glass and other ceramics along with soap products. Exploration of several deposits, particularly the Eagle Borax works in the south part of the Valley, the Searles Lake operation near the present day sight of Trona, California, marked its development.

The 20 mule teams and their huge creaking wagons hauled the borax the length of the valley floor and out of the southern end to either Daggett or Mojave.

The years from 1905 to 1907, saw the boom of the Death Valley mining camps. Skidoo, Harrisburgh, Rhyolite, and Panamit City were crowded with miners seeking those last great strikes, The Death Valley bonanzas.

The roads between the towns saw a lot of traffic, but the travelers were so spread out, they rarely encountered each other. During that two year span, 16 men were found on the valley floor, on or near the main roads. Most were never identified.

One poor man is said to have died of new boots! He left Rhyolite, attempting to cross the valley in summer. Before leaving, he apparently bought new shoes for the seventy mile walk to Skidoo. After just a few miles, heat caused the new footwear to swell up his feet, making the shoes unbearable. He discarded the useless things and tried to walk without them. But his feet soon became cut and were bleeding. With thirst gnawing at him, his throat caked with alkali dust, Alfred Nard became a statistic.

In the summer of 1906, a young mining engineer named Morris Titus and two friends set out to do some prospecting from Rhyolite. After many miles travel, they arrived at a known spring expecting to replenish their water supply. However, as is the case with many desert waterholes, it was dry. The party split up, looking for water. Young Titus wandered into a narrow canyon some distance away

Continued on page 58

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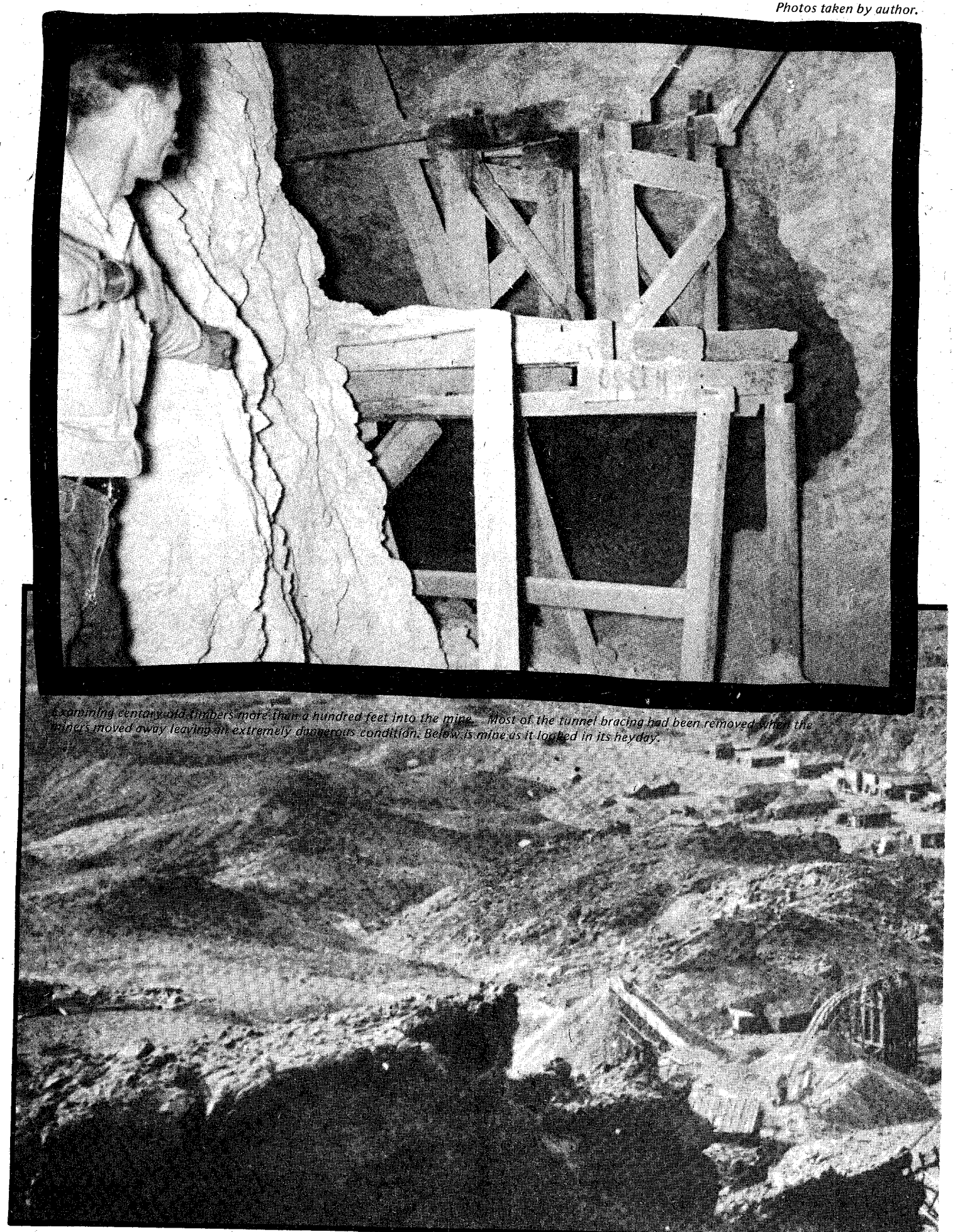
Photos taken by author.



Examining century old timbers more than a hundred feet into the mine. Most of the tunnel bracing had been removed when the miners moved away leaving an extremely dangerous condition. Below is mine as it looked in its heyday.

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by M. Minton

DEEP IN A FORBIDDEN SILVER MINE IN THE CALICO MOUNTAINS

SEARCHING THE HIDDEN DEPTHS

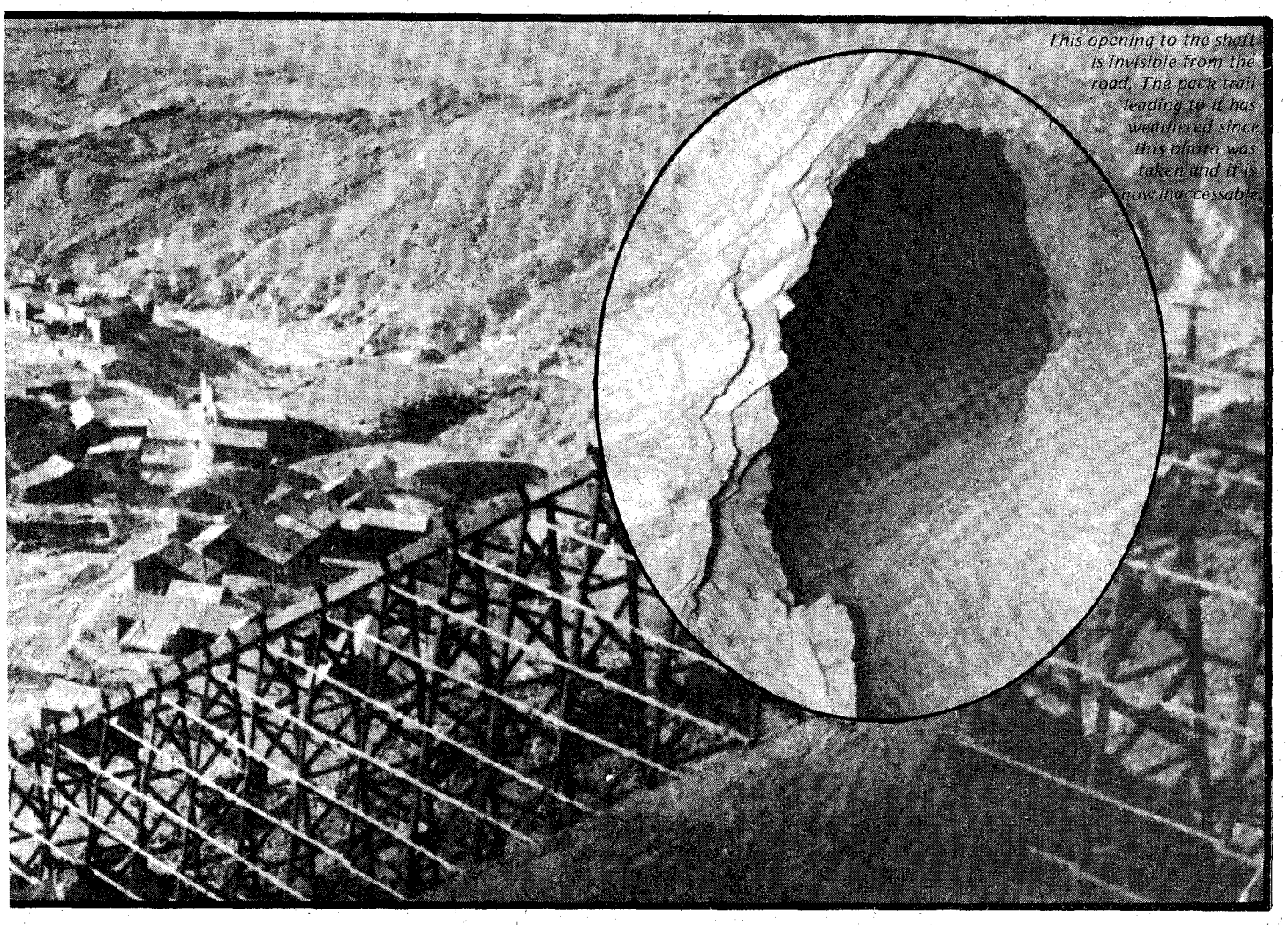
An afternoon spent in a forgotten level of a closed silver mine in the famous Calico Mountains of San Bernardino County, California provided a most interesting bit of research into the working world of the century-ago miners.

All accessible entrances to the mine had been dynamited closed after work was stopped when the price of silver dropped and the exodus began from the Calicos.

Perhaps the entrance we used was forgotten when the others were dynamited, or was left open because the engineers believed no one could travel the narrow, dangerously weathered pack trail which had, in some places, crumbled and fallen into the canyon.

I am not pin-pointing the exact location of the mine since it is, with good reason, closed to the public. Every year this area of San Bernardino County averages at least five or six accidents in abandoned mines to inexperienced people trespassing on the property of non-operating mines.

During the time the mines were in operation, as a safety precaution, each tunnel being worked was inspected by a "knocker," a man who tested walls and ceilings for loose



This opening to the shaft is invisible from the road. The pack trail leading to it has weathered since this photo was taken and it is now inaccessable.

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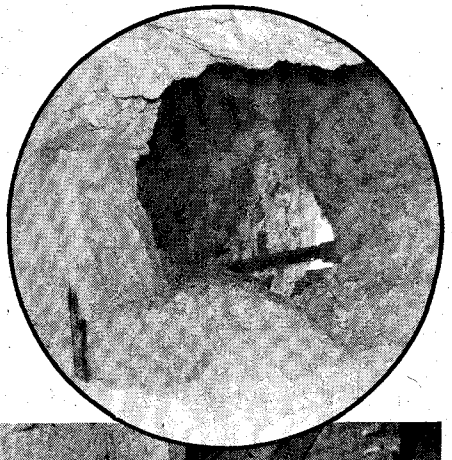
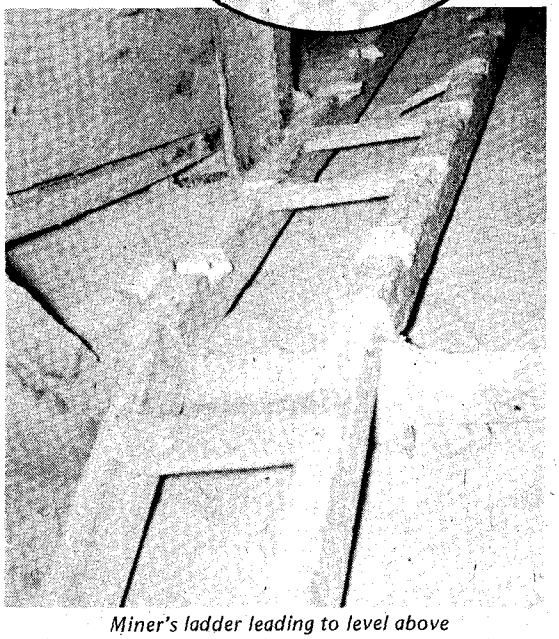
Looking up and out from the mine. Just in front is an open shaft estimated to be almost 100 feetdeep.





Miner's ladder leading to level above shows wear from years of heavy use.

SEARCHING THE HIDDEN DEPTHS

rocks and ledges and pried or knocked them down to prevent their falling on the miners, or causing a cave-in. Even with this safety measure, there still were occasional cave-ins in the Calico mines with some loss of life.

With recurring earthquakes in California and the resulting stress on the rock strata of the mountains within the past century, exploring abandoned mines is extremely foolhardy and not to be encouraged. This logical reasoning has come to me partly as a result of exploring one level, midway of the mountain, with perhaps a dozen other levels hundreds of feet below and above us with no shoring or support other than the rock formation of the mountain.

Perhaps it was the influence of John Barry's "Uranium Mine Murder" during the four years I worked with him as my editor on the *Victor Press* at Victorville which led me to start a murder story of my own against the background of the mining country of the Mojave Desert.

In researching the mining history of the locality I made the acquaintance of several miners in the area, among them, Paul Scott, who for a couple of years had lived on, and worked his Single Ace claim in the Ord Mountains; and Wayne and Marvin Williams who were in partnership with Tom Farley and three other part-time miners at the near-by Dixie Queen.

I found hard-rock miner Tom Farley a wonderful source of information on minerals and mines in the area, as well as a source of local color in the development of that section of the country since the turn of the century. The late Ed Ainsworth of the Los Angeles Times has paid Tom a nice tribute in one of his books.

Paul Scott and the Williams brothers adopted me as a promising tenderfoot and included me in many informative "explores" of abandoned mines and treks over impossible terrain in Paul's jeep when they checked out the location of mining claims from legal descriptions.

For the most part, the mines could be classified as "glory holes," abnadoned either because they showed low-grade ore or from lack of capital for development.

When I met Wayne and Marvin at a neighborhood cafe for supper one Friday night, they were bubbling with enthusiasm about a mine Paul had led them to that day in the Calico Mountains. Marvin presented me with what vaguely resembled a gargantuan upholstery pin.

"That," he informed me with the reverence he might have used in bestowing the crown jewels, "is a hand-forged belaying pin. I risked breaking my neck to climb nearly fifty feet up a perpendicular wall in that old mine to get it for you, It is a real souvenir of the old mining days."

Wayne insisted that he take me through the mine the following day. I invited Steve and Polly Stephens of Apple Valley along.

"Take a good look at that mountain right over there," Wayne instructed me at one stop, pointing across canyons and ridges. "See that mine 'way up on the side of it? That's the one we're going through this afternoon."

I swung the binoculars back and looked across the lower ridges and intersecting canyons to where he pointed, and stared at the timbers perched midway up the mountainside, at what looked like a giant landslide oozing away from them.

"It makes me dizzy just to look at it from here," I said, uneasily, a queasy feeling suddenly developing in my middle.

"Oh, it isn't nearly as bad as it looks," Wayne laughed reassuringly. "The level we're going through is above the old dump you can see on the mountain side. The entrances to all of the lower levels have been dynamited closed to keep people out. It isn't exactly safe for the general public."

Later that day, I found Wayne's casual remark to be the understatement of the century.

I raised the binoculars again and studied the distant mountain. Bare, forbidding rock; no trails that I could locate; no openings; nothing but a bare, forbidding mountain of solid rock.

After lunch Wayne was eager to be on our way. As his excitement built up, my apprehension increased. I kept remembering those weathered timbers half-way up the sheer face of the mountain, their sagging under the weight of countless thousands of tons of dump rock.

Nor was I reassured when Wayne had Steve stop the car directly below the retaining wall of the old dump to give us a closer look at the ruins.

The view through the binoculars that morning had not shown how much the timbers had rotted and broken, letting tons of rock slide down the mountainside above the narrow canyon road.

We estimated that the retaining wall probably had been standing for almost a hundred years and we agreed that its life-span was holding on borrowed time.

Steve drove a short distance farther to where the canyon widened and parked the car.

"This is where we start climbing," Wayne invited with a wave of his arm toward the mountain before us. A few yards from where we stood was the beginning of a dim trail, hardly discerible in the layers of loose gravel on the mountainside.

"This used to be the pack trail up to the mine," Wayne told us as he led the way up the steep incline, the gravel shifting and sliding under our feet with every plodding step.

When we had climbed higher, the gravel gave way to solid rock footing and the trail became a ledge so narrow that our right shoulders brushed the solid rock of the mountainside while on our left was a sheer drop of hundreds of feet to the floor of the narrow canyon.

One dizzying look at the depths yawning beside me, left me the color of an animated hunk of peridot. Thereafter I kept my eyes glued to the steep trail.

"Imagine their leading packed

Continued on page 60

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THE ALMOST LOST ART OF MAKING A RAWHIDE REATA

RAWHIDE

by Walter Rickell

Photos taken by author

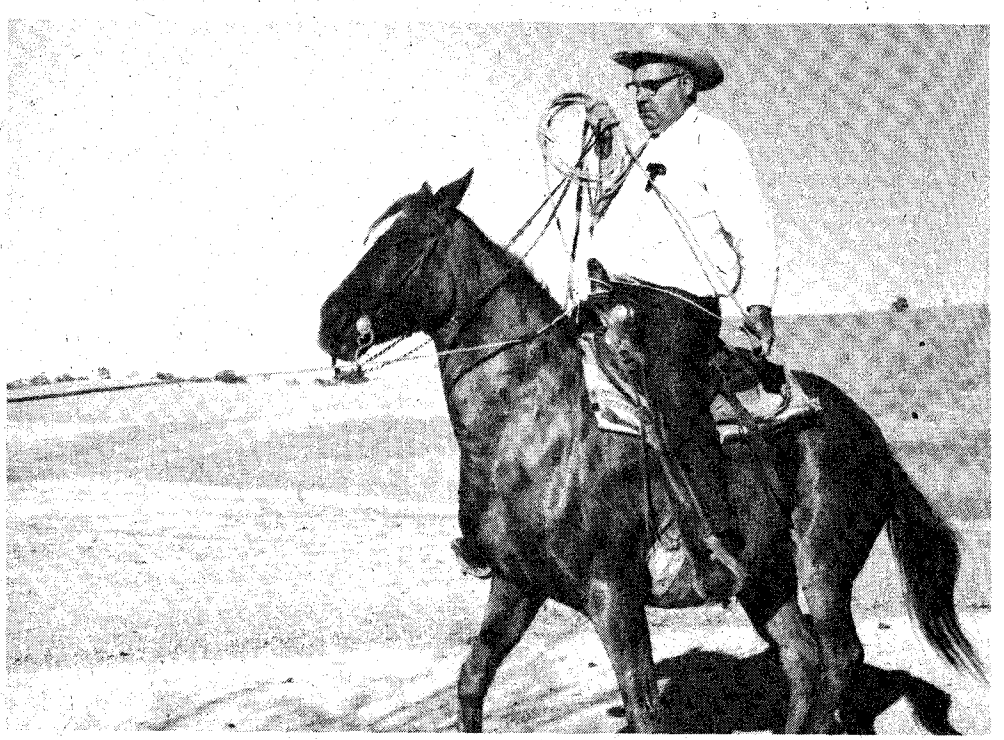
One of the cowboys tools is the lariat, the word is a slang version of the Spanish or early California la Reata'. It is a rope made of braided Rawhide; this material is used since there was no other practical substance available. Although not as strong as the grass ropes of Mexico or the hemp ones of Texas it produced a breed of cowboy that was far more professional and superior as a roper than any ever. He was the California Buckaroo who used this reata as a way of life, for all his chores, for pleasure and a defensive weapon since firearms were little known in the early California countryside.

The reata was usually 80 to 100 feet long, braided of rawhide strings in a four plait style although some were six plait. With this piece of equipment he could completely immobilize a steer at sixty feet or more, also he dallied to the saddle horn. This meant the reata was never tied to the horn as in Texas, but kept free until after the steer was caught. Then he wrapped the rope around the saddle horn and played the quarry as a deep sea fisherman would a large sail fish. So expert was this California Buckaroo that he could rope the largest steers and throw them without a cinch on his saddle.

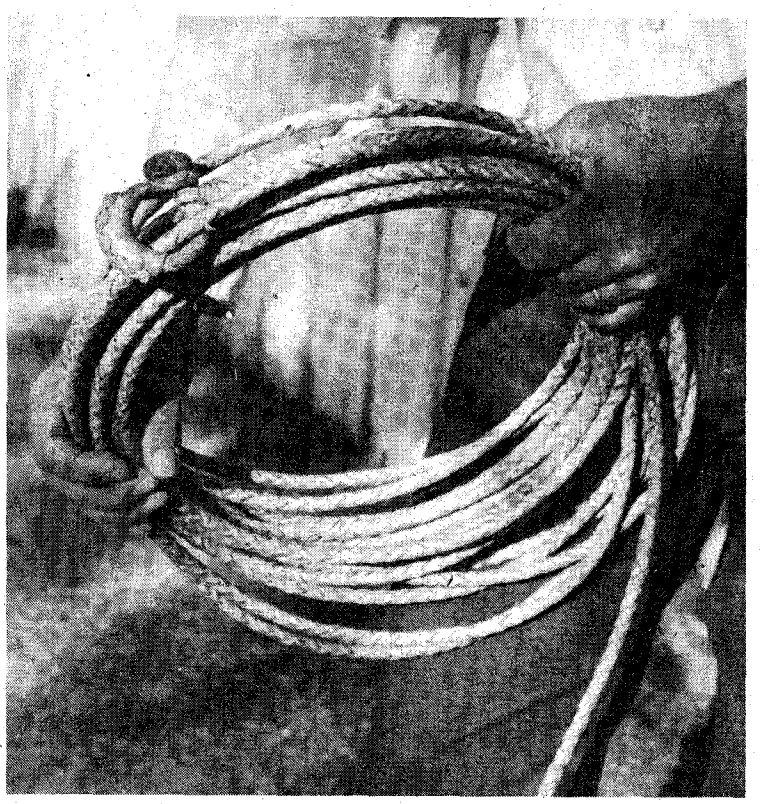
He also used it for sport and would go into the mountains and rope the local grizzly bears, bringing them back to the town for the famous California bear and bull fights.

Well, making this important piece of equipment is an art and in the old days there were quite a few good makers but today it is relagated to only a few and in fact, only two that I know of. One is Ernest Morris a western artist and a descendent of one of the all time great braiders and Buckaroos Jesse Wilkinson of Paso Robles, California. The following are the procedures required to make the reata as taught to Ernest by his grandfather.

First step is to obtain the rawhide from a freshly killed bovine preferably an old dairy cow since the hide is the best for the purpose. After fleshing the hide it is then placed in a barrel of water for about a week to soak out the blood. Blood is the deadly villain to rawhide for if left there it will start the decaying process.



Ernest Morris demonstrating the use of the California Reata. Note the reata is on the left side of the horse and the dallies stacked on the saddle horn.



The completed reata with honda in place. When finished the rawhide is treated with a piece of beef kidney tallow and raw liver.

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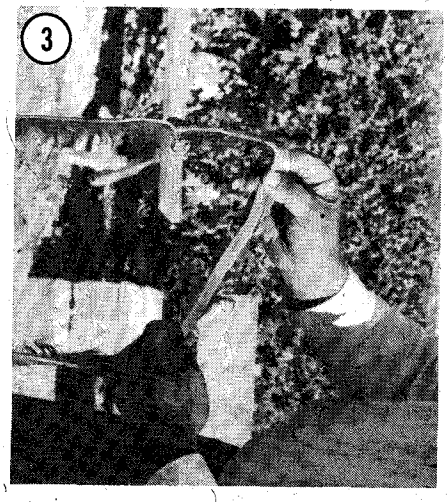
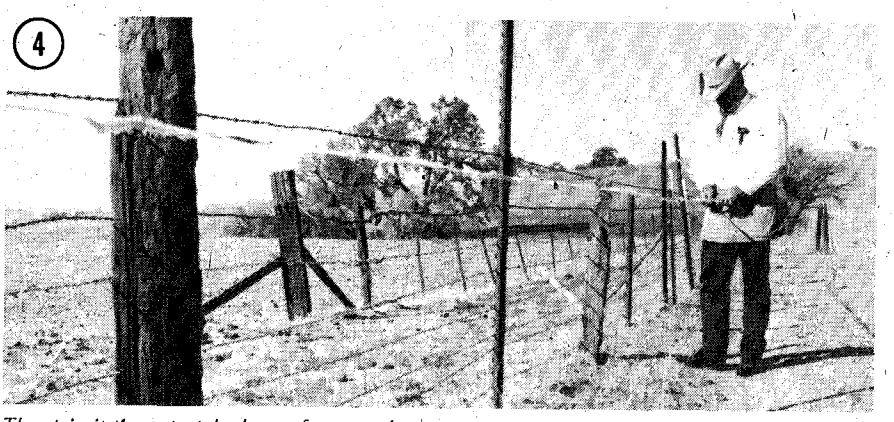
MAKING A RAWHIDE REATA

After it has been soaked the hide is removed.

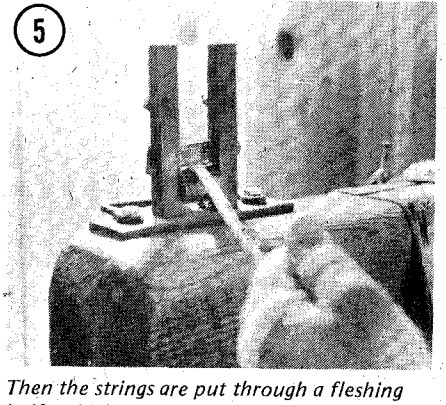
Then the hide is laid flat on the ground and the strip is begun from the outer edge after the belly and curles are removed.



The strip is made from around the outer edge about ½ to ¾ of an inch wide. The cutting is continued toward the center until there is no more hide and the strings are kept in one piece.

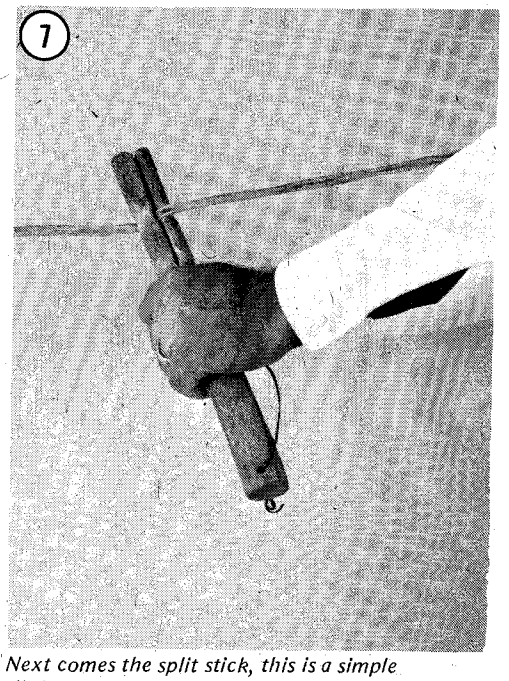


The strip is then stretched on a fence to dry and when this is completed the hair is then removed by scraping with a knife. After this is done the strip is then replaced back into the water barrel till it gains the correct consistancy for fleshing. For a 80 foot reata you will need four strings 100 feet long.



Then the strings are put through a fleshing knife which trims the strings on the flesh side to an even thickness.

This process requires not only strong hands and a sharp knife, but a strong back too. The fleshing knife is mounted to a solid frame work.



Next comes the split stick, this is a simple slit in a piece of hardwood and the string is pulled through it. This flattens the string and allows for an even width.

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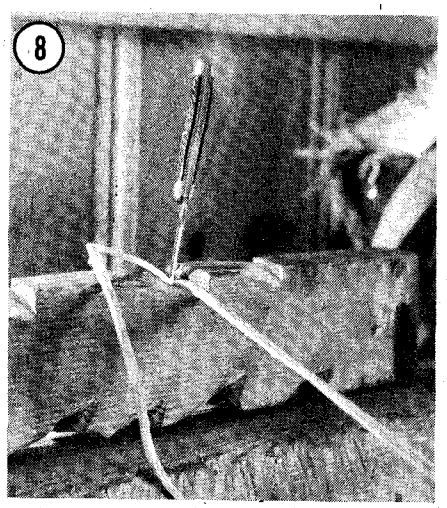
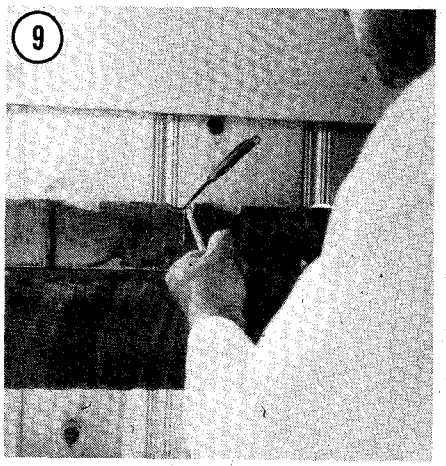
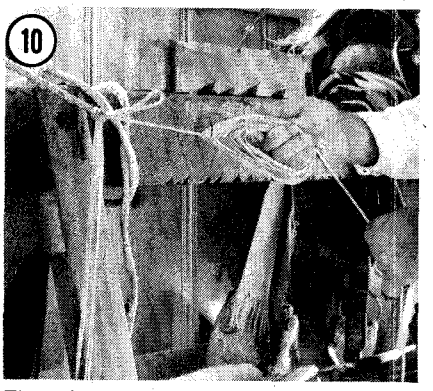


This is the trimming process. It is done by placing a pocket knife or blade in a notched plank at the correct width and pulling the string through.

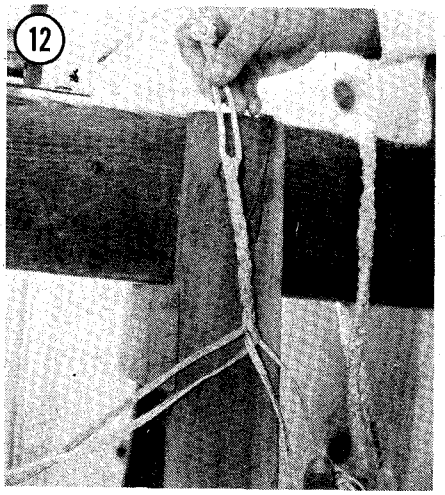


After this is done the string is then cornered on both sides This removes the sharp edges and gives the braid a smooth flowing surface. It is achieved by placing the knife at the correct angle and pulling through on both edges.

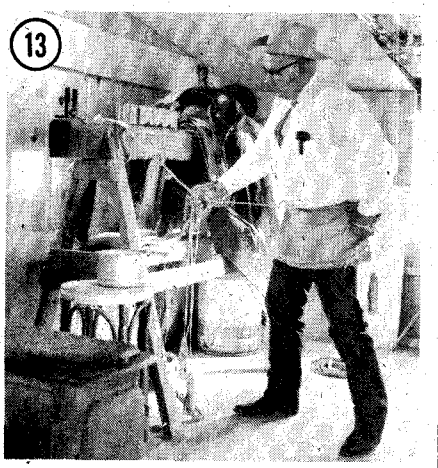


The strings which are about 100 feet long are then divided in the middle and then each end is rolled into what is called a tamale.

The finished tamale. This is done so when braiding the ends will not become tangled. The tamales also are the method used to store the prepared rawhide strings and when needed for braiding they are soaked in the water barrel overnight.

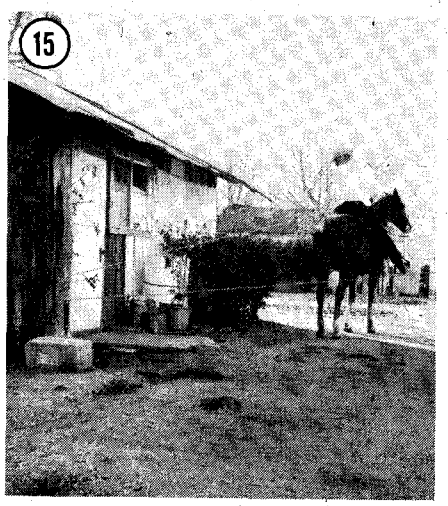


The reata is a simple four plait as seen here.



The braid is started in the center and after each completed braid of four it is hit with the hand to tighten the braid, as this is done the strings are moistened with a mixture of Fels Naptha soap and water. This requires a pair of tough hands and a pair of heavy work gloves with the fingers removed are used to protect the hands.

After the braid is finished it is then pounded on an anvil, each braid is flattened to uniformity. Of special interest is the anvil used by Ernest. It was made from a piece of rail from the old San Francisco cable car tracks.



After the reata is through the pounding it is then pulled through a series of holes in a post. This finishes it and this stretches it to its finished length.

Next the honda is made from a short length of the reata and finished into a circle. It is then shaped over a wooden pin and attached to the reata.

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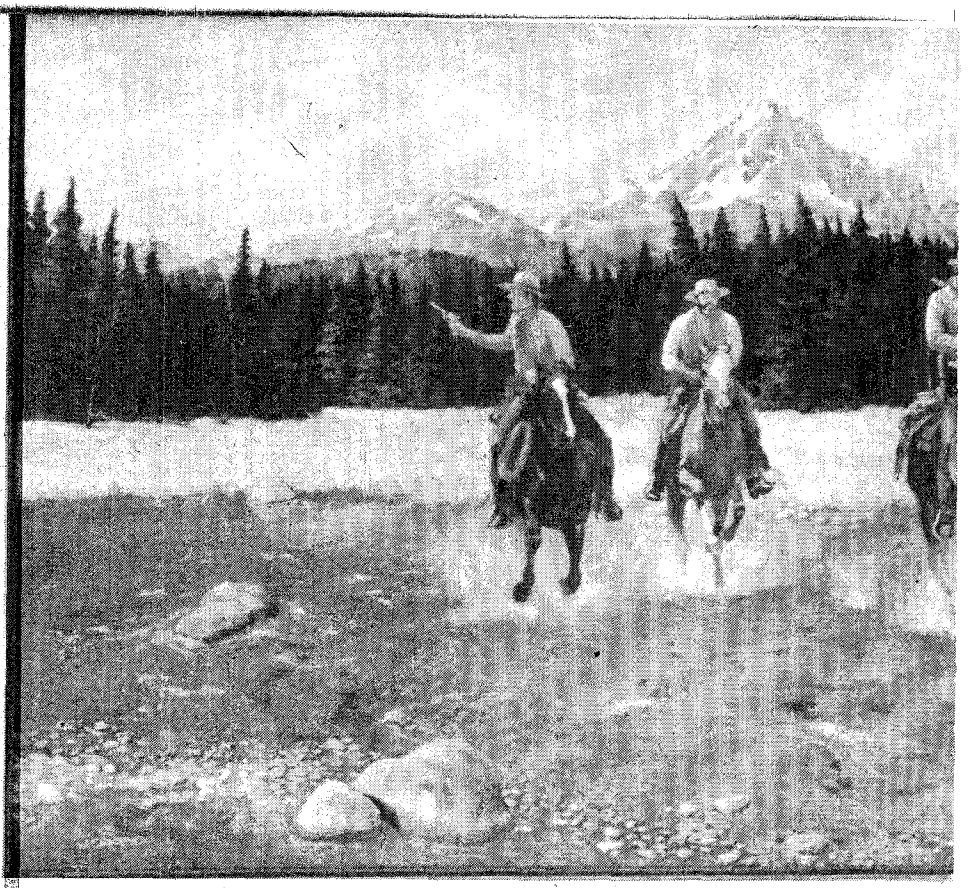
WESTERNER'S FEATURED ARTIST



Jerry Crandall
Painting History

by Judy Henry

Unquestionably, Jerry Crandall belongs to the 19th Century for he has captured a spirit and feeling for the Old West as only one can do who has fully experienced and absorbed its excitement, beauty and grandeur. Whether it be a mounted Cavalry pistol charge on a fully packed McClellan saddle, an 1880 gunfight or the entrancing dances of the Plains Indians. Jerry Crandall has done it all and more. To his way of thinking, accurate representation of the period can only be correctly accomplished through first-hand knowledge and familiarity. This feeling is not artificial. His belief coupled with his enjoyment in recreating history causes his brush to vibrate with energy breathing life into every creation.

Born near Bent's Fort on the Santa Fe Trail in the small Colorado town of La Junta helped to kindle the first fires of love for the West and its people, for Jerry could often be found playing near the ruins of the once active trading fort. It was in La Junta, too, that he was invited to join the World-famous Koshare Indian Dancers, a select group of scouts who study the ways of the Indian through making their own costumes and dancing in the style of the Plains Tribes. Because of this, his deep understanding and respect for the American Indian was realized.

Each potential theme is carefully researched before a brush touches the canvas. To aid him in this quest for true-to-life accuracy, he owns a horse, rides in a Cavalry Memorial Reenactment group and is an avid collector of artifacts. His studio is literally filled with the penetrating essence of leather eminating from his saddles, holsters and various other accoutrements from both the cowboy and the Cavalryman. Dominating the other side of the room is a fine collection of Indian furnishings from pipebags, moccasins, to fetish bags and horse trappings all of which are set in context and brought to life in paintings by the artist. In addition to his stockpile of reference material, Mr. Crandall is constantly reading the old manuscripts, books and newspapers plus studying all the old photographs which chronicle important events.

According to him "People have the wrong impression due to the movies and television. This is particularly true about the personage of the gunfighter. He would not be found, for instance, wearing a black leather vest with silver conchos and a modern low-slung, fast draw holster. The rolled hat as is so often seen in the films, is part of the modern cowboy."

Professionalism is the keynote throughout Jerry Crandall's works both technically and creatively. His attention to detail is remarkable. Constantly as one views Jerry Crandall's works, one senses the feeling of pounding hooves, quivering muscles, and blistering heat; the odor of sweating horses, and damp leather; the taste of campfire blackened beans and coffee; the glisten of well-worn saddle leather and burnished firearms; or perhaps experiencing the quiet majestic serenity of grazing buffalo; each masterfully captured on canvas and possessing a rich warmth of color and of action seldom encountered.

Jerry Crandall believes strongly that Western history can be effectively told in the form of a work of art, because only in the artist's power of selection and portrayal does one view an event or personage with the understanding of a place in time with a historical context assembled by the artist into one coherent, consistent, and sympathetic viewpoint. And one is entranced with the prospects of the thoughts of a gunfighter, the great Indian leader Sitting Bull, or Major General George Armstrong Custer so strikingly captured by Mr. Crandall in portraiture.

Mr. Crandall's art can currently be seen in several prominent galleries including Petersen Galleries in Beverly Hills, California, and the John Hampton Gallery in Scottsdale, Arizona. His intimate knowledge of horses, Indian costume and accoutrements makes his paintings authentic historical records which come 'alive' and make the viewer more than a interested observer but a willing and involved participant.

The artist may be contacted by writing to Jerry Crandall; P.O. Box 6783, Torrance, CA 90504.

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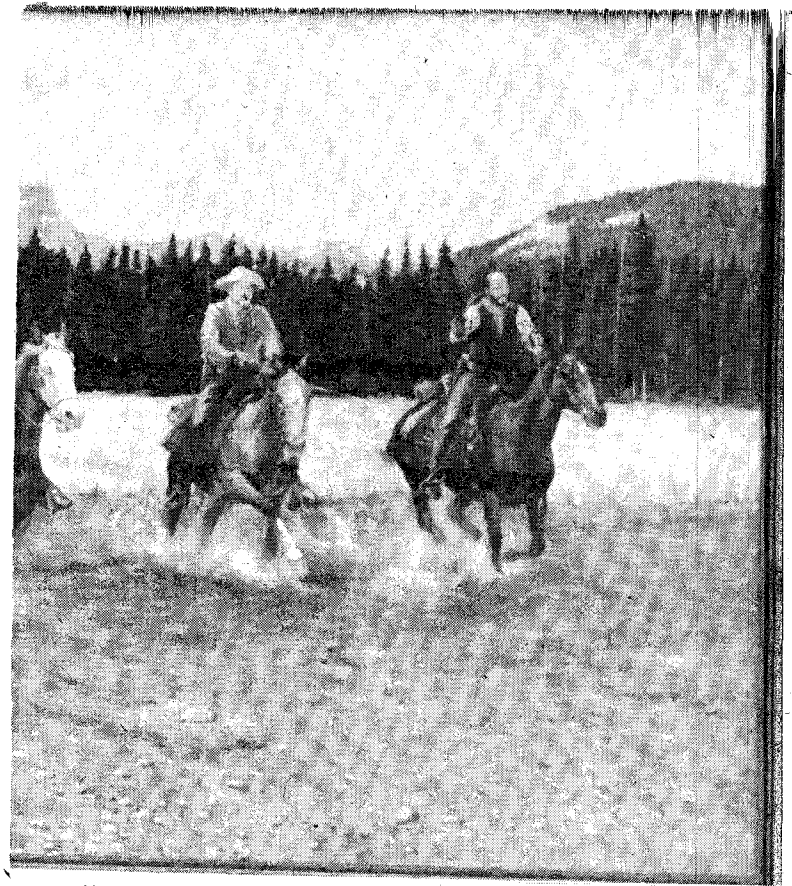
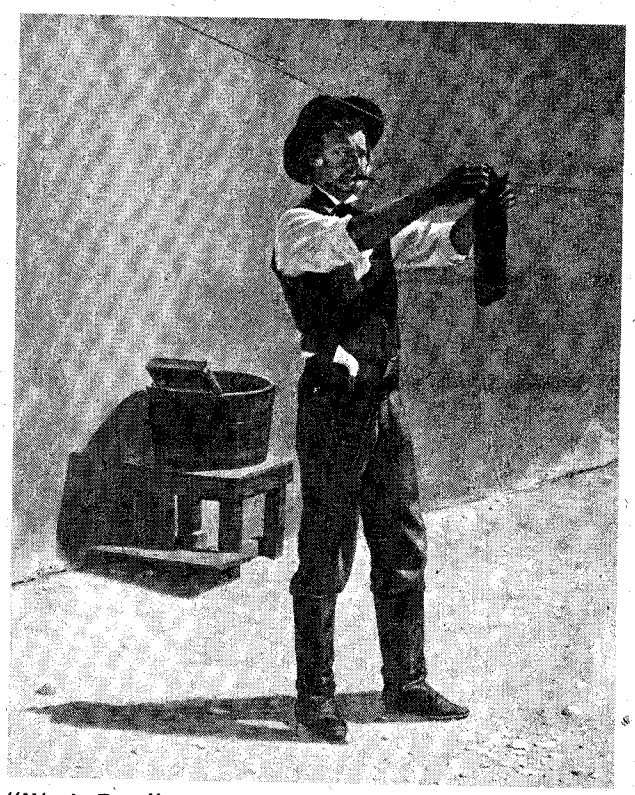


"Cold Water, Hot Lead"



"Wash Day"

Jerry Crandall

"Renegade"

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EZRA MEEKER'S PECULIAR SEARCH FOR GOLD

He Didn't Dig For It - He Bought It With A Bushell Of Potatoes - And That's A Lesson For All Would-be Gold Seekers...

by Howard Clifford

"Gold, Gold in the Klondike!"

Those were the magic words that sent thousands of argonauts from all over the world to the far north following the arrival of Schwabacher's dock in Seattle on July 17, 1887 of the North American Trading and Transporting Co.'s S.S. Portland with its "ton of gold" from the Klondike.

Tacoma, and as a matter of fact, the entire country was in the throes of a major financial depression at the time. Unemployment was at a record high, bank failures were an every day occurrence, and farmers, as well as others were on the verge of bankruptcy.

One particular Puget Sound farmer who had suffered a double setback was Ezra Meeker, the nation's "hop king," who resided in the lush Puyallup Valley. Not only did Meeker suffer financial reverses as a result of lending most of his ready cash to financially strapped neighbor farmers who were unable to repay their loans, but additional havoc was caused by hop lice which had destroyed this valuable harvest throughout the Pacific Northwest and to be more specific the Meeker spread in the Valley.

Ezra Meeker - photo was taken when he was 70 years old and just starting his Klondike search. University of Washington Library photo. White's Pass shown at right.

Came the Gold Rush to the Klondike. Meeker remembered the foodless state of the Fraser River rushers of some years previous when he moved his dairy herd from Puyallup to Bellingham and made a tiny sum selling dairy products to the thousands heading to the Fraser River gold fields from that city.

He decided that there would be many in a similar plight in the Klondike. Despite the fact that in 1898 he was bordering on the proverbial three score years and ten, he decided to make the trek to the North. The preceding years of his life had fitted him well for the hazardous undertaking. His youth had been spent on the frontiers of Ohio and Indiana and he had been toughened to hardships on the Oregon Trail. He had hewed out a home in the Western wilderness and founded a town in a clearing in the forest primeval.

He departed for Alaska with a supply of foodstuffs destined for the men of the Klondike. He believed that a fortune could be made that way. It could, and Meeker made it. But he lost it, too!

Meeker started from Puget Sound with fifteen tons of freight and got through with nine. His cargo was unloaded on the beaches of Dyea and he carried it with the assistance of professional packers over the rugged Chilkoot Pass, where at one point it was necessary for him to pay packers $40 a ton to backpack the load the final 2,000 feet to the summit.

He reported that the trip for part of the way reminded him of scenes on the plains in 1852 — such crowds that they jostled each other on the several parallel trails when there was room for

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more than one track, and in addition so steep that the ascent could only be made by cutting steps in the ice and snow, 1500 in all.

"Frequently every step would be full while crowds, joustled each other at the foot of the ascent to get into the single file, each man carrying a one hundred to two hundred pound pack on his back," Meeker stated.

Next came the trip down the Yukon in a hand-crafted flatboat from the headwaters at Lake Bennett through the dangerous White Horse Rapids where hundreds lost their lives, and thousands lost all of their worldly possessions which they had struggled so hard to bring this far as the turbulent waters dashed their craft to bits in the rock-strewn stream.

Meeker took a good soaking, as did his supplies, on the trip through the Rapids and he vowed that he would not ever make the journey again. He did, however, four times during the two year period he conducted business in the North.

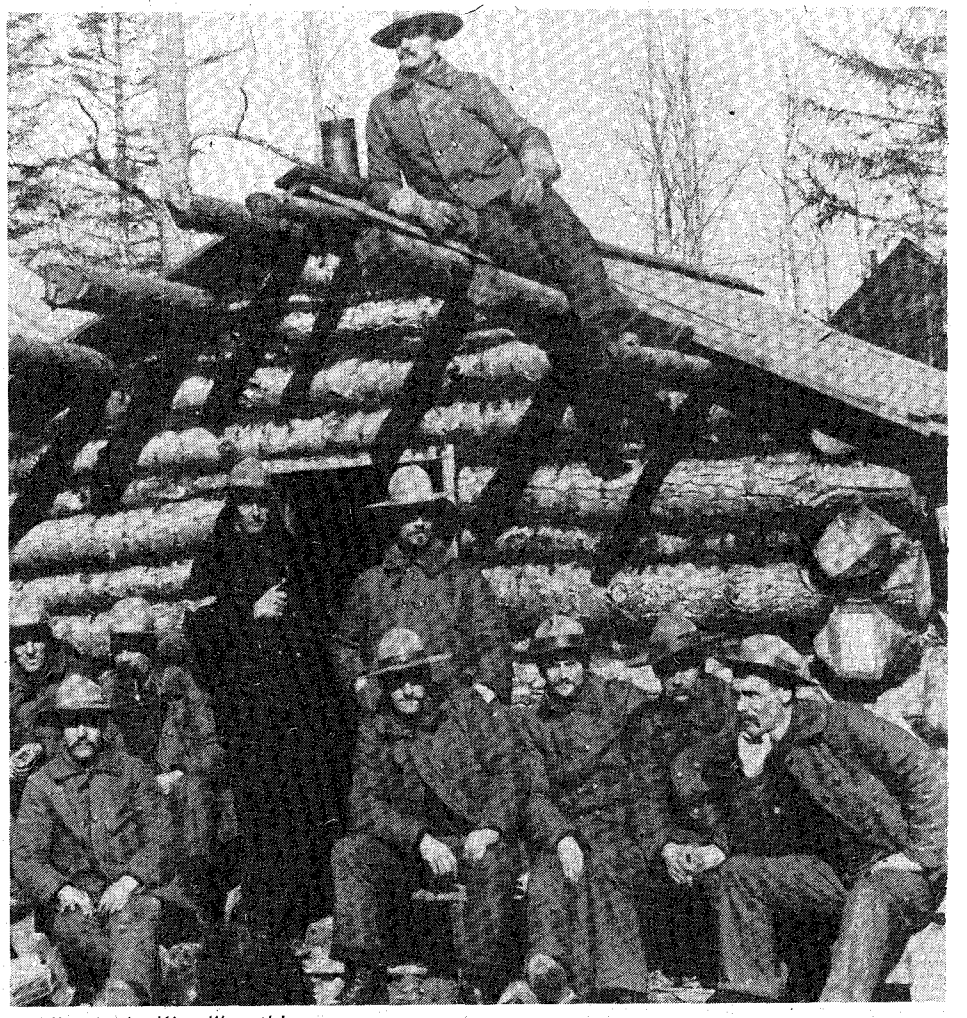
He arrived in Dawson with nine tons of the original fifteen, and sold his fresh potatoes at $36 a bushel and the other things in like proportionate prices. Within two weeks he started up the river, homeward bound, with two hundred ounces of Klondike gold in his belt.

Meeker reported that his trips to the Klondike became real adventures. On his second trip he fortunately was detained a couple of days, and as a result escaped an avalanche on the Chilkoot Trail that buried fifty-two people in the snow. He passed by the area the second day after the catastrophe on his way to the submit and doubtless over the bodies of many of the unknown dead, imbedded so deeply in the snow that they were never recovered.

It was on this same trip that he reported that he came through the White Horse Rapids perfectly dry, and then when going down Thirty Mile River, it seemed as though "we could not escape being dashed upon the rocks, but somehow or other got through safely while the bank of that river was strewn with wrecks, and the waters had swallowed up many victims."

When the Yukon proper was reached, the current was not so swift, but the shoals were numerous, and more than once he got hung up on the bar, always with the uncertainty as to how he would get off, Meeker later reported.

All of his trips, with one exception, were made without damage to the flat-bottomed scow. On that



Soldiers in the Klondike - this group was brought in to keep order among miners.

Dawson at the turn of the century where Meeker brought his 15 tons of vegetables.

Dyea, the gateway to the Klondike located just below White's Pass. Note horses in water pulling supplies. Photo courtesy of the Alaska Travel Division.

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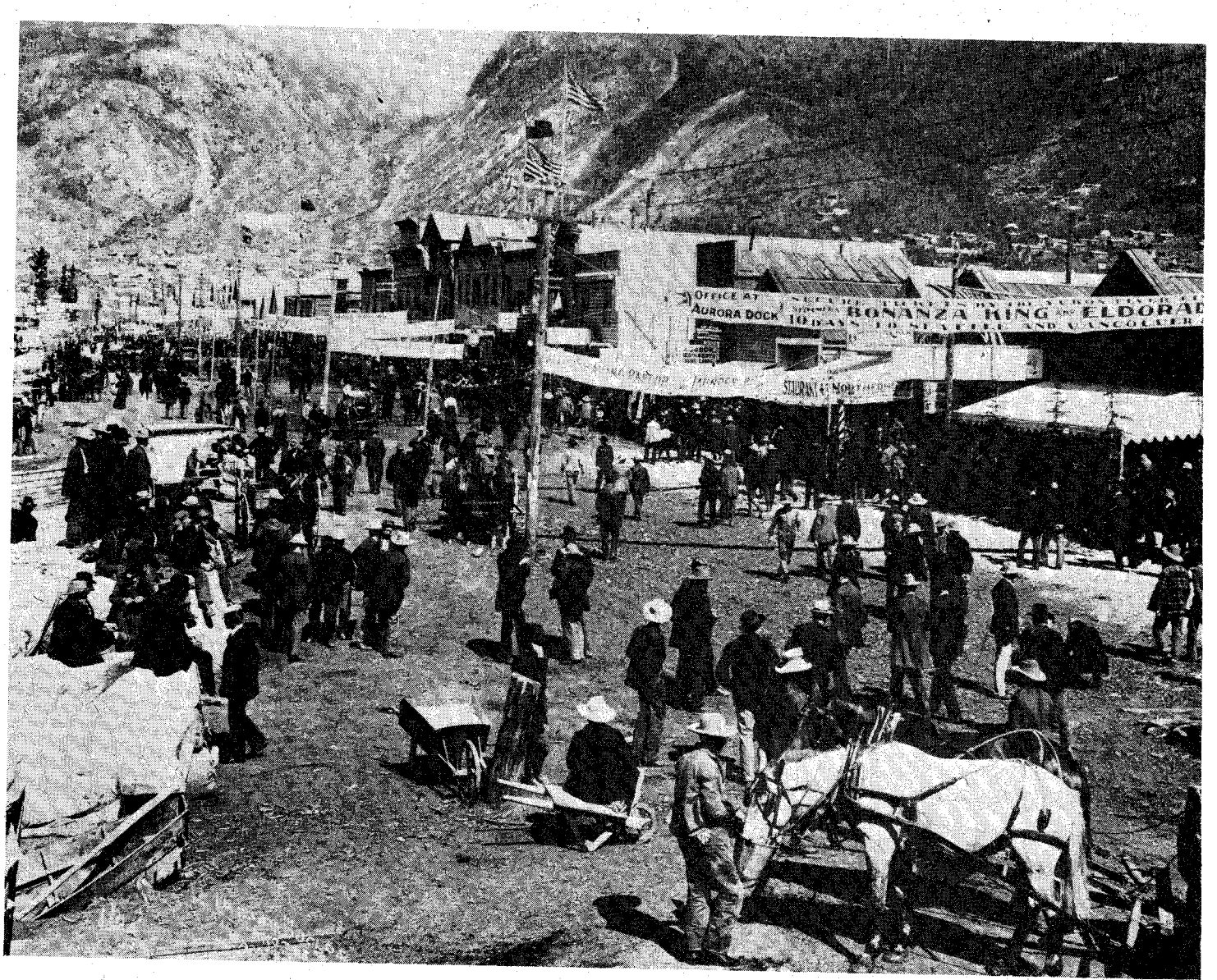

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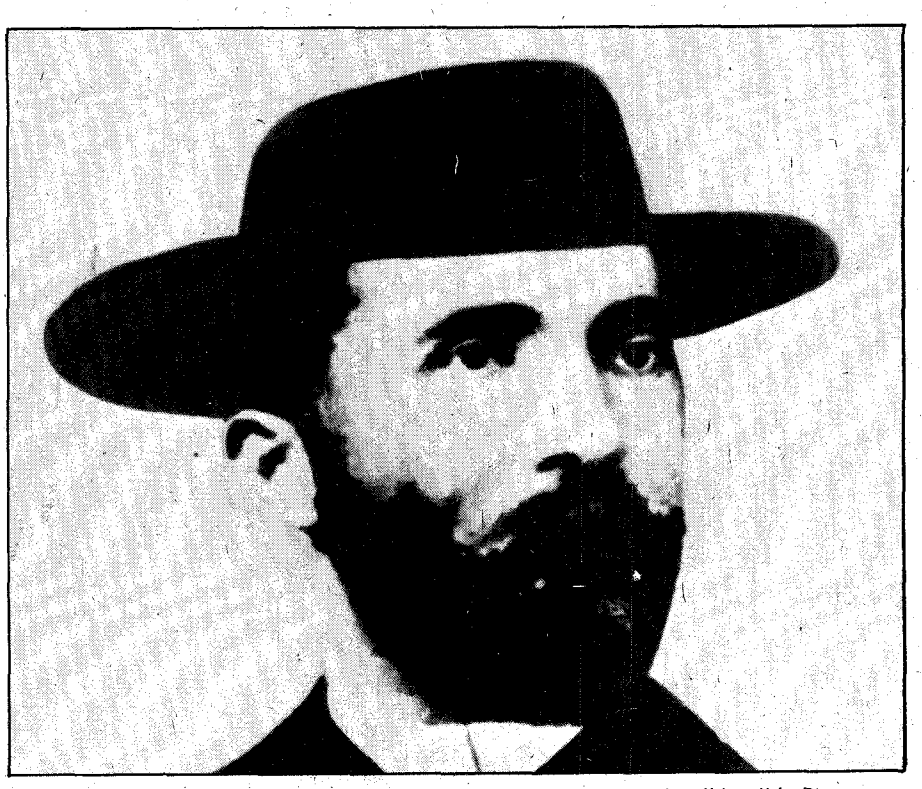
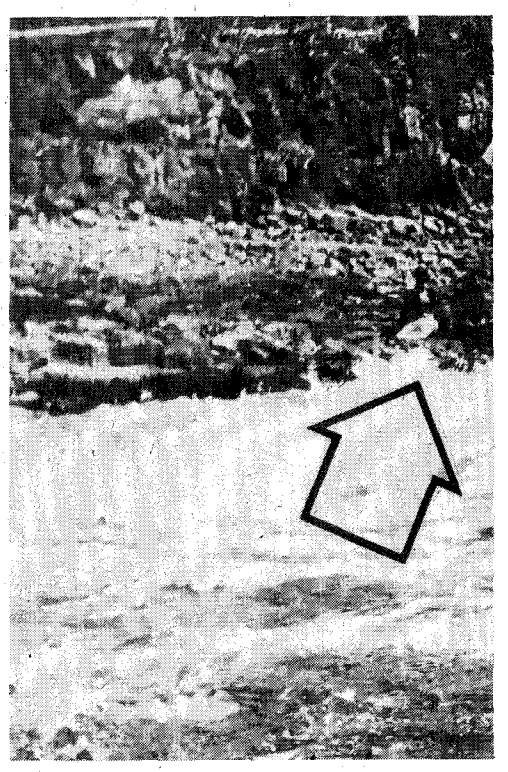


EZRA MEEKER



Treacherous White Horse Rapids where Meeker rammed a hole in his boat. Note two men (arrow) who have just swum to shore.

one trip a hole was jammed into the scow and for a time it was felt that Meeker was a goner, but he effected a landing so quickly that he was able to unload the cargo dry.

Meeker reported in his book, "Ventures and Adventures," I now blame myself for taking such risks, but curiously enough I admit that I enjoyed it, substained no doubt, with the high hopes of coming out with 'my pile.'"

Such, however, was not the case. Bad investments in mining properties in the Klondike resulted in a loss of all his earnings and he came out over the rotten ice of the Yukon in 1901 to stay, and to vow that he never wanted to see or visit another mining country.

Two weeks after his arriving home in Puyallup, the Meekers, Ezra and Eliza Jane, celebrated their golden wedding anniversary, and he enjoyed the joys of a welcome home even if he did not have his pockets filled with gold.

Meeker later reported thathad it not been for the loss of his fortune, that he would not have taken the Klondike adventure, and so maybe, "the loss was a blessing in disguise, for no happier days of my life were passed than while engaged in the writing of this adventure."

Meeker lived to enjoy many other adventures, such as retraveling the old Oregon Trail again by oxen team, later flying over the same route by modern aircraft. He finally passed away in Seattle on December 3, 1928, just a few days short of his 98th birthday.

Soapy Smith, who also did well in Dawson.

Departing for Dawson and the gold fields, this group of miners (below) are out to make their fortune - statistics reveal that only two of the five would survive.

Front St. in Dawson. Meeker's store can be seen at far right of photo.

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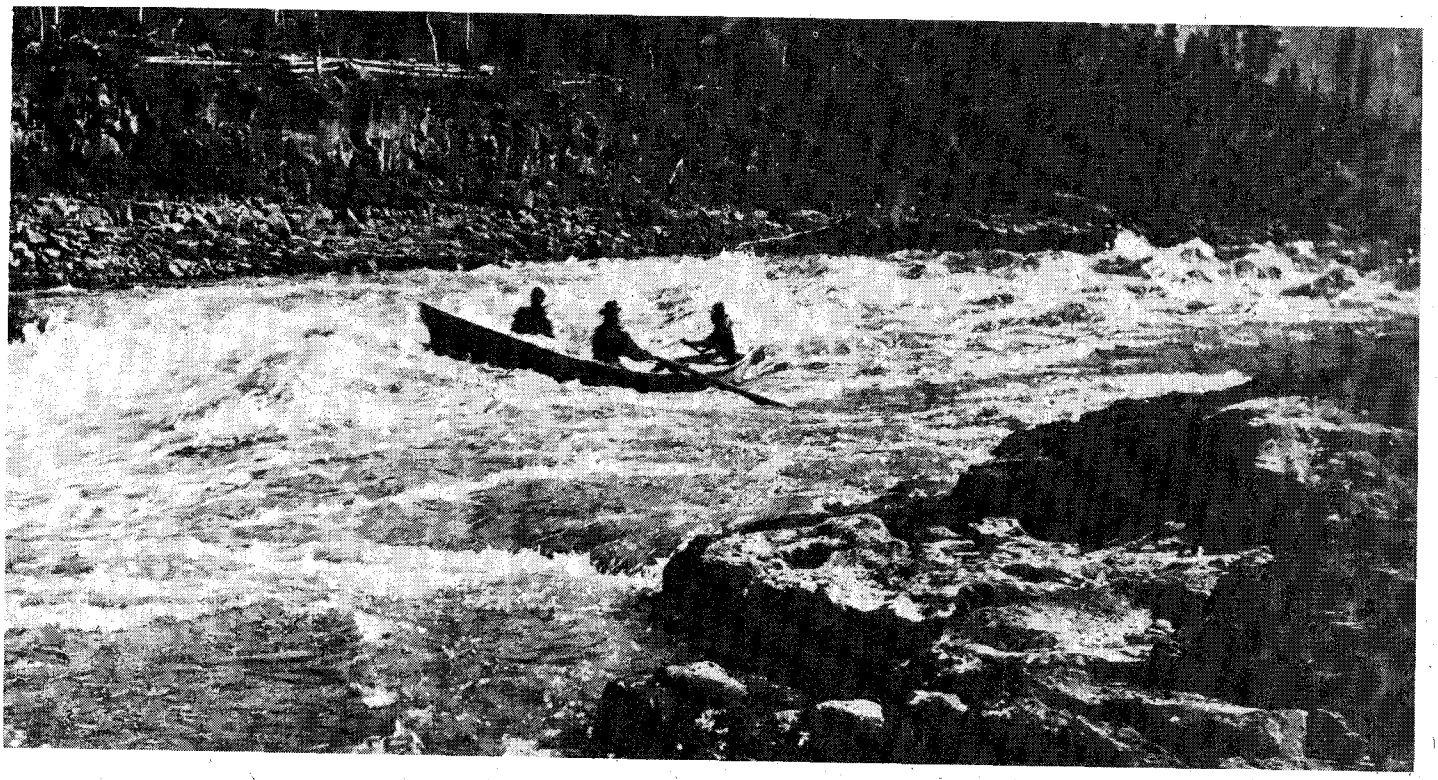

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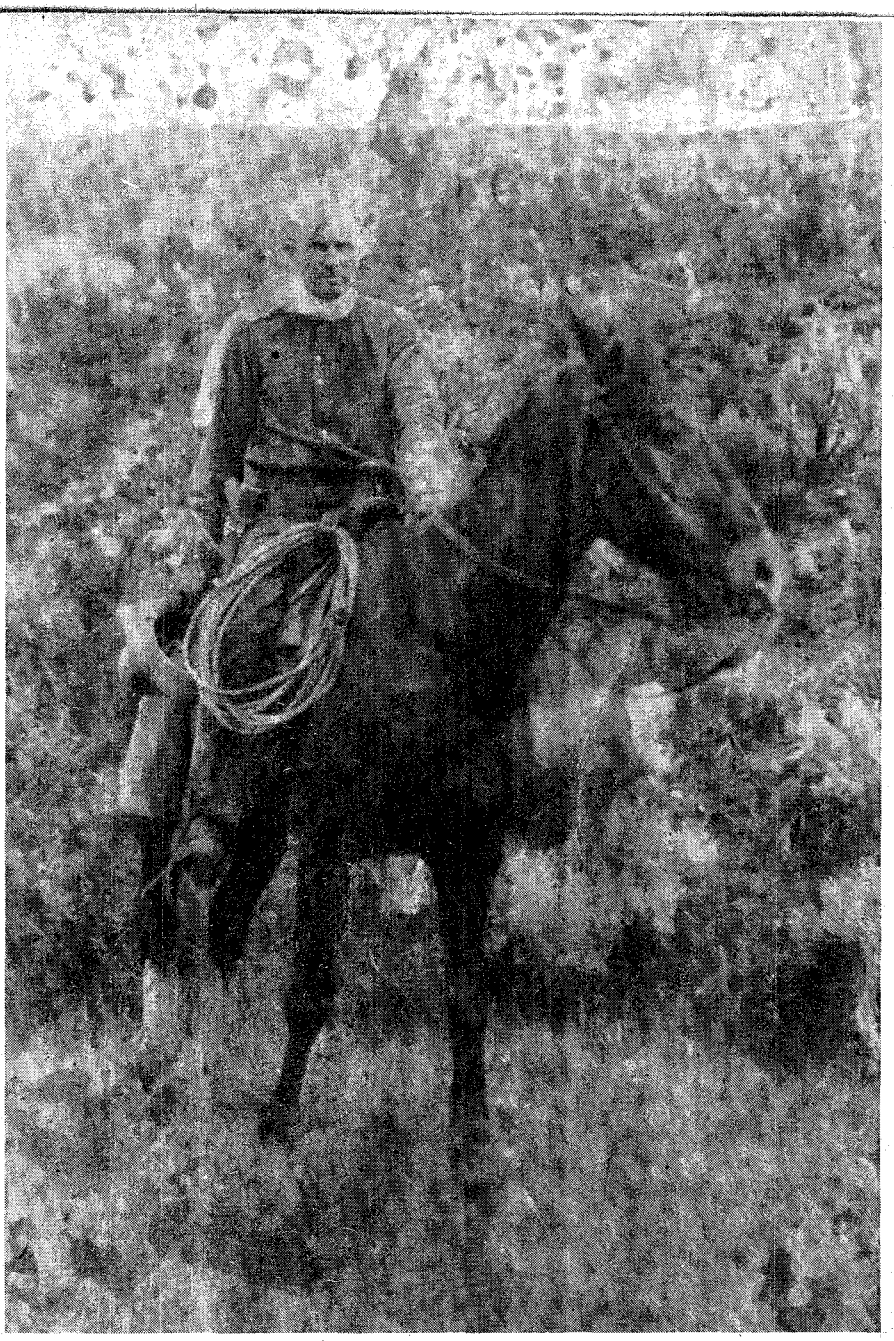

The Galloping Swede – Gus Larson who escaped with the pail full of money.

by Harry Webb

It seemed we cowhands couldn't go into any town for a bit of relaxation without running into trouble. In fact, it appeared Trouble went out of its way to find us.

For instance, I mind the time "The Galloping Swede," (we called "Gus" Larson that because he seldom rode slower than a long lope) Bud Bridges and I talked our Roundup boss, George Pennoyer, into letting us go into Shoshoni one sizzling June afternoon in 1908. Bud had been with the M Bar so long he was a "fixture" so was our spokesman. His urgent excuse was, "We want to get measured for a hair cut and a cold beer." We were due to stand second guard that night so promised we'd be on hand in plenty time for our ten o'clock guard duty.

Shoshoni lay just a quarter mile across the Wind River from our wagon, but that didn't mean we could get there without going to the bridge five miles up stream. Shoshoni, Wyoming was only three years old but was already rated the wildest, craziest town since the heydays of Meeteetse and we had no sooner tossed our reins over a hitch pole near a saloon called "Aaronson's" or "Arnoldson" — something like that — when a group of blanketed Indians surrounded us, "said "How," and withoutfurther ado piled onto us and proceeded to rip us apart. This, we couldn't savvy because the Shoshones were a friendly breed.

Gus wasn't big but what he lacked in size he made up in Panther movement, bull hide toughness and as strong as a Lumberjack's Rockford sox. On top of that he was meaner'n a poor cow pulled out of a bog hole once you got him mad and he was sure sure hostile now. Good thing we all liked Indians or Gus would have unholstered the heavy Spanish Mauser, he all but slept with, and killed a few Redskins. As it was he had flattened a couple before Bud and I could get our bearings.

Indians, we discovered, didn't fight like Whites. Howling like coyotes they were ripping our shirts and bandannas to shreds. But numbers made up for their lack of slugging know-how and it wasn't long 'til the cowboys and Indians had the street littered with tattered apparel and blood. Then one, who spoke good English and said his name was "One Moccasin" and claimed to be a Carlyle graduate saw they had made a mistake and apologized.

The ruckus had come about through them having given five dollars to some rider with which to buy several pints of fire water for them. But whoever the rider was he had gone in the saloon's front door and on out the back with their money. We had tried to tell the Indians Gus wasn't the one but these blanketed, moccasioned Shoshones weren't caring for white man's talk. They were after their five dollars. Just to show he held no grudge the Swede took a chance on winding up in Leavenworth by buying a gallon of bar whiskey for a dollar and presenting it to them.

Bud tucked what was left of his shirt inside his Levi's and said "I don't know about you fellers but it's gon'ta take somethin' stronger'n beer t' ever get my nerves back inside my skin!" Trouble was, we no sooner had reached the bar than the place was little less tranquil than the alkali street had been.

George Wimsey from Lost Cabin and a gambler known as "Leppie Frank" were in a brawl over something

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TO HELL WITH SHOSHONI

"It'd Have To Be Raining Turkey Soup In January And Me Starvin' Before I Ever Set Foot In That Town Again!" - Of Course, He Was Referring To The Great Egg Eatin', Indian Fighting, Whiskey Guzzling Contest. . .

Photos supplied by author

Shoshoni, Wyoming much as it looked when the boys were attacked by the crowd of Indians. Photo from the George Ludin Collection.

and soon a couple of patrons took sides and the Swede being primed for another fight said "Come on, fellers, let's take a hand in this an' show 'em what a real fight looks like!"

"Not me," Bud countered, "my insurance didn't even cover such hazards as that battle with the Redskins!"

When bartender Skaggs assured us it was only a friendly fight, the Swede set up the drinks. "Every time that Wimsey hits town," Skaggs continued, "him and Leppie gets in a fight over some little thing. Last time it was who could spit the farthest, now it's over who can out eat the other. But that feller Wimsey is due for a loss if he thinks he can out eat our Leppie Frank." Looked that way to us, too. Leppie's overhanging paunch attested to a huge capacity.

Once the two were separated and held to the arguing stage Wimsey, shouting curses, hauled out a double eagle to back up his own storage tank. "Take him on, Leppie," Skaggs urged, "and I'll bet a few greenbacks on you, myself." Opening the till he set a bucket on the bar and tossed some bills in it. "Get your bets in this bucket, folks," he called. "I'll keep tabs so everybody will know what he's bet. Come one come all!" he shouted.

Skaggs, like most bartenders of the era, considered himself the town "Ladies' man" and sported a walrus mustache and parted his blonde hair squarely in the middle which irked the Galloping Swede to the point of telling him so in no undertain terms, causing Bud to tell him to "Dry up and cover Wimsey's twenty dollar gold piece." Skaggs said "And I'm hiking you another ten myself, Wimsey."

"You're on," Wimsey said, slapping two twenty dollar gold pieces in the bucket. During several rounds of drinks, with everybody invited, wagers of all sizes went in the bucket before eggs, all styles, could be agreed on. Wimsey had held out for steaks, as it was rumored he had won a hundred dollar bet in Lost Cabin by wrapping himself around twenty five huge sirloins in exactly thirty seven minutes. Leppie had heard this rumor and wasn't about to walk into a losing game.

That morning, "Nels," something or other, the Norwegian cook, had pried the lid off an egg case so he was well supplied. At least he no doubt thought so. Nels slid several big skillets and two pots for boiling water on his

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NEVADA'S Red Haired Cannibals

THE FACT THAT THERE ARE NO KNOWN PHOTOS ONLY PROVES THIS STORY IS TRUE

The two Piute women trudged down the narrow, twisting trail. Between them they carried a large basket filled with roots which they had foraged from the hot, foot-burning soil. Suddenly the trail gave way and the women plummeted into a deep pit. Before they could struggle to their feet, they felt sharp lances pierce their bodies, and looked up at the rim of their prison.

The small patch of blue sky was almost obliterated by the crowded bodies of tall savages as they leaned over the pit and stabbed at the bodies of the women. Soft flesh was pierced time and time again. One woman was dead and the other gave the appearance of being so. Two of the savages jumped into the pit and picked up the women. With little more effort than tossing a small stone, they pitched the soft, limp bodies over the rim of the pit where huge, muscled arms caught them.

On the verge of death, but able to comprehend, the one woman gave a last gasp of pain as her right arm was torn away from her body. As the woman's life ended, her last conscious thought was "I am being eaten by the 'red-headed people eaters'."

Fiction? No. The episode described above was almost an every day occurrence with the Piute Indians of Nevada until the early part of the eighteenth century. In 1883 Sarah Winnemuca Hopkins, daughter of a Piute chief, described the giant savages in her book *LIFE AMONG THE PIUTES*. She wrote: "a small band of barbarians used to waylay my people, and kill and eat them. They would dig large holes in our trails at night and our people would fall into these holes."

"That tribe would eat even its own dead," reported Ms. Hopkins. "They would even come and dig up our dead after they were buried, and would carry them off and eat them. The Piutes called them the 'red-headed people eaters.'"

The tribe of giants numbered 2000 when the Piutes launched a war against the cannibals, Ms. Hopkins wrote. There were many battles between the two groups. Finally, the Piute was victorious. "Toward the end of the war those that were left among the giants went into a cave. My people watched at the mouth of the cave and would kill them as they came out to get food and water."

"My people asked them if they would be like us and not eat people like the wolves and the coyotes. But they would not give up. My people gathered wood and began to fill up the mouth of the cave. At last, my people set the wood on fire. At the same time they cried out to the giants, 'Will you give up, be like men, and not eat people like beasts? Say quick — and we will put out the fire'."

There was no answer from the dark cave.

"In ten days my people went back to see if the fire had gone out," Ms. Hopkins wrote. "They returned and told my great-grandfather that they must all be dead. All members of the tribe who were exterminated had red hair."

Lovelock, Nevada is approximately 90 miles northeast of Reno, with a population of 1600 hardy souls. In 1912 when David Pugh and James H. Hart decided to mine bat guano, the town was hardly more than a settlement. When the two miners returned to town one day and informed the residents that they had found the mummy of a giant, the news did not create much excitement. The people of the small settlement had heard the legends of the giants from the local Indians for years. They just did not believe the tales about giant savages being buried in local caves.

Since that day in 1912, scores of mummies have been recovered from a single cave. Scientific dating with sophisticated instruments indicate that the cave has been continuously occupied from 3000 B.C.

Today, Piute Indians continue to live around Lovelock: many of them can recall the legends handed down from father to son.

"My grandfather called the red-headed cannibals the 'Siwash Indians' relates one Piute." But there has never been a full-blooded American Indian with red hair. It has also been told that the giants were light-skinned and had long, lean faces."

Stoker's Museum in Winnemuca, Nevada is owned by Clarence Stoker, seventy years of age. As a youth he had helped excavate artifacts and mummies from the cave. A giant skull taken from the cave, twice the size of an average man's skull, is Mr. Stoker's lead attraction.

Were the cannibals intelligent? Stoker believes so. He has a calendar stone recovered from the cave. The outside of the stone has three hundred-sixty-five dots to represent days. The inside of the stone has fifty-two dots to represent the weeks. Most certainly, a savage, un-thinking brain would have little use for such a calendar.

Stoker also believes that the giants may have been the descendents of Egyptians who came to America on woven, reed rafts. Thor Hyderdahl proved that it could be done when he crossed the ocean on such a raft several years ago.

We have the legends and we have the mummies. Regardless of where these giants came from, we know that they were here. Perhaps in time we will find the answer as to who the red-headed giants were, and maybe who we are. by. Rik Gates

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ADAMS DIGGINGS

Continued from page 11

they thought, no more than thirty warriors with him, and the men decided that the Indians were a hunting party and would cause no trouble. Anyway, they felt sure they could whip any number of Indians. In this the Dutchman did not concur; he had had experience with Apaches.

The guide did no mining. One day he was seen talking with Nana. Again the Dutchman was apprehensive. That evening he asked for his pay and was given the two good horses, the silver-mounted saddle, a rifle and ammunition. But a day or two after he left the canyon the Dutchman recognized one of the horses. It was being ridden by an Apache. Again his warning was disregarded. That caused him to cache his gold with that of the others. Against his advice some of the men were disobeying Nana's orders and going below the falls to get the placer gold. They would return each evening with a coffee pot full of nuggets. They reasoned that the gold must have come from upstream, and their rich finds seemed to substantiate that idea.

They had accumulated a vast treasure before their supply of food ran low. There were various estimates as to its worth, but the minimum one was ninety thousand dollars. Some thought that each man must have between twelve and thirteen thousand dollars' worth. And they'd hardly scratched the surface!

But they must have chuck. Davidson delegated six men including the Dutchman to take a pack outfit to Old Fort Wingate and purchase, with some of the gold, food and more tools for mining. At that time the fort was located near Grants, New Mexico, at about the present site of San Rafael. They estimated that at least six days would be required for the return trip. Meanwhile there was an abundance of deer in the canyon, and they were not yetout of other food.

When at the end of the sixth day the packers had not returned, Davidson became concerned and he and Adams walked to the top of the canyon to look for them. At first they found no traces, but upon rounding a point near a deep crevice in the rim rock, they discovered the bodies of the six men, bristling with arrows, scalped, and otherwise mutilated. Pieces of string and wrapping paper indicated that they had been returning with the supplies when attacked. But no food was found. However, the tools were there.

Among the bodies of the six was that of a man they had never seen before; but that of the Dutchman who was with them, was not among the dead. And they recalled that he had taken his share of the gold, approximating more than twelve thousand dollars, with him.

When they reported the deaths Adams said that one of those men must have had a premonition, for he had given Adams his wife's name and address and asked that he write her in case anything happened. He couldn't let that man — nor any of them — go unburied. After warning the rest of the danger of attack, Davidson and Adams took picks and shovels and returned to the crevice in which the bodies lay. There was almost no soil available and they covered the bodies with loose stone and left for the cabin. Before they got very close they heard wild yells and knew that the men had been attacked. Smoke and flames showed that the cabin was burning and they had no hopes that there were any survivors. They hid by the side of the trail to await for dark so that they might go down and attempt to get at least part of the hidden gold. But at three in the morning the orgy still was in progress. Adams told Davidson of an unusually large nugget that he had hidden some distance from the cabin. He said that he would creep through the underbrush and try to get it. After a long and tortuous crawling that did not get him near the hidden nugget he returned to Davidson. And the two hit the trail for Fort Wingate.

After walking for nearly two hours the approach of dawn drove them into hiding. They concealed themselves in an aspen grove and went to sleep. About noon Adams was awakened and he watched six Indians ride slowly by, looking for tracks. Fortunately the trail was over almost solid rock, and they found none. He woke Davidson and they took inventory: no food; no water; six cartridges and a sixshooter. That was their equipment. And they were desperately thirsty and hungry. Adams was a crack shot and they decided to wait until the Apaches were well away before attempting to kill a rabbit. Adams wound his shirt around the gun to deaden the sound and killed a cottontail. Dry aspen boughs make little smoke so they used them for roasting the meat.

After dark they resumed their flight. The next morning they ran into a detachment of cavalry from Fort Wingate. They had as prisoners six painted Apaches whom the troops had captured. From the belt of each dangled a fresh scalp. Adams, crazed perhaps by anger, hunger and stress, pulled his revolver and shot five of them. When he aimed at the sixth the hammer clicked on an empty chamber. The officer in charge placed Adams under arrest; but he mounted both Adams and Davidson on ponies the Indians had ridden.

When they reached the fort both — though Davidson was not under arrest — were placed in the guard house. But the captain who brought them in must have been in sympathy with Adams, for his own horse, saddled, with another carrying food and a canteen, was left near the guard house. And someone carelessly left it unlocked one night. Six shooters and ammunition, too, had been provided.

Where Davidson went I do not know; but Adams made his way to Quemado where he got a pack horse and enough supplies to enable him to reach San Diego. There he promised his wife that he would never attempt to find the canyon and the gold.

It was fifteen years before he was tempted to break that promise. Upon attending a Masonic meeting he told of the finding of the canyon with the gold and offers to help finance a trip to find it were made. He told them that he might be unable to find it again, as it was in a very rough terrain, with hundreds of canyons, of mesas covered with scrub pinon and juniper, that made travel difficult, and that at best it would be a doubtful undertaking.

Among those present was a man who had been a ship's captain during the Civil War; later he had operated a merchant vessel. He offered to go with Adams the following spring and pay half the expenses. Captain C.A. Shaw took with him a map, a sextant, and a small book for recording his observations, so that they might know just where they were and not explore the same terrain a second time.

They made the fourth trip before

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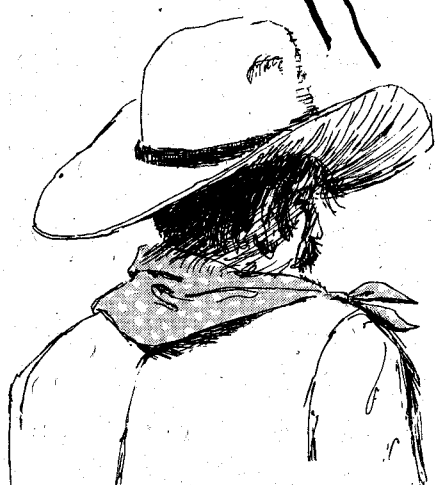
COWBOY FLAG

A FAMILIAR ACCESSORY WITH SO MANY USES THAT IT SYMBOLIZES LIFE ON THE RANGE



TO PROTECT THE BACK OF THE NECK FROM THE SUN

FOR A BANDAGE

A SLING FOR A BROKEN ARM

A DUST MASK

A BLIND FOLD FOR SKITTERY HORSES

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ADAMS DIGGINGS

Continued from page 51

Adams found any recognizable landmarks. There were two peaks so shaped that when brown in Fall they much resembled haystacks. There was another that looked like a bear's head. When Adams saw these he asked Shaw if he recalled their being in doubt when they reached a fork in a small stream as to which fork they should take. He did. They returned to the fork and followed the other. This was in 1886.

Adams had been warned by a doctor that his heart was bad, and he had symptoms of trouble, but was so excited over at least being on the right track that he would not heed Shaw's insistence upon turning back. Before they reached the little door opening into the canyon containing the gold Adams suffered a heart attack and Shaw took him home. In September, the 21st, of 1886 he died at San Diego.

In the Spring of 1887 Shaw came to Alma, New Mexico, to see my father. He said that Father had been recommended to him as an expert on mining, and a man of integrity. Father was running about 1200 head of cattle at the time, and at first was not interested. But he liked Shaw. And for the next twenty-four years he spent much of his time with the captain hunting the Lost Adams Diggings. At that time, Shaw, enfeebled by age, retired to an old soldiers' home where he died August 15, 1917, at the age of 85.

And though I had little interest in hunting gold, when Lawrence Parsons and my father went through the Mogollons in search of it, I accompanied them. We camped one night by a stream in a deep narrow canyon and in less than a half-hour caught enough trout for an ample meal for the three. I believe they were the best fish I ever ate.

A year later I made another trip with Father north of the little village of Luna on the Arizona line, and he showed me the stream where he and Shaw at first took the wrong fork. It is in beautiful country with tall pines.

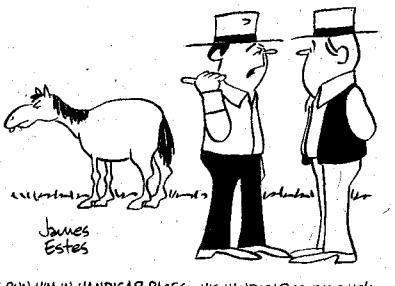
While I would not recommend that anyone go in search of the Diggings. I would urge that he take a month's pack trip into the Gila Wilderness. Anyone who gives himself that pleasure may find no gold, but he will acquire a lasting pleasure that he can neither lose nor have taken from him. He will have something that cannot be bought nor lost. And sometimes that is worth far more than gold.

Perhaps I am unable to understand the mysterious appeal that gold holds for some people. It does lure many who might not be attracted to its value in any other commodity, such as iron or coal. But it is no stranger than the great appeal the mystery of that country holds for people of my type.

For that part of the Southwest has an irresitible appeal to me, and to many others. It is one difficult to analyze. The mountains, the stark cliffs, the mesas, and the quiet little valleys, many of which are still unspoiled by modern man, are dotted with countless scores of a culture of bygone days. Standing among these ruins on an isolated mesa one can almost hear and see the ancient people going about their daily tasks. And no one can doubt but that they were an industrious people.

When one has lived there a number of years that feeling gets under one's skin and leaves an indelible impression as does tatooing with indelible India ink. It becomes a part of one, a part never to be lost.

For a country so majestically romantic and mysterious it is small wonder that tales of hidden treasure and lost mines become of paramount interest around the camp fires. And it is understandable that with each telling some slight alteration of detail, or exaggeration of value occurs. There must be a hundred versions of the accounts of the Pegleg, the Lost Dutchman, and the Adams Diggings stories. One has only to hear them and take his choice. Of the others I know little, but having beeen reared in the atmosphere and possibly in the locality of the Adams Diggings, I was fascinated. In addition I spent a summer in the saddle with my father. Nor did my keen eye fail to attempt to identify the landmarks by which the entrance to the canyon might be determined. There are many who think it may be found above the famous Cat Walk in the box canyon out of Glenwood; others have sought it in the Malpais. I like the story as told many, many times by my father and by Captain Shaw.



"I RUN HIM IN HANDICAP RACES... HIS HANDICAP IS THAT HE'S SLOW AND STUPID!"

CLIMAX JIM

Continued from page 15

never able to convict him. When he was hailed into court, friendly witnesses would fail to appear against him. If captured he would often evade the law by some weird and absurd escapade.

Climax once had stolen thirty head of cattle from the noted Chiricahua Cattle Company, and was headed across the territory line into New Mexico before he was apprehended and brought to trail. During a recess in the hearing before the Justice of the Peace, Climax begged to change his hot and dusty clothes.

Now, the Justice of the Peace also owned the blacksmith shop in this small Arizona village and he instructed the deputy to allow Climax Jim to go there to change his clothes. In less time than it takes to tell it, the deputy reported back that Climax Jim had "gone out the same hole that the smoke goes out" in the blacksmith shop. The outlaw's old clothes plus his new clean ones were found on the floor. Climax Jim had gone in the door and streaked out the smoke hole in the blacksmith shop as naked as a jaybird. The Florence Tribune reported this news in 1899.

Peace officers reported that Climax Jim broke out of every jail in the county. A famous pioneer reporter wrote that Climax rode into Tucson in 1901 to do a bit of gambling and rest up from his "arduous task of cattle rustling." The outlaw himself described how he had escaped from a sheriff at St. Johns, Arizona by a cunning ruse, as he was being guarded by a couple of deputies. It was like this:

After undressing, Climax Jim sat on a cot for a moment. Then suddenly feigning a fit of anger, he threw his boot against one wall, his jacket against another. Deliberately he took off his blue jeans and shirt and sat stark naked on the cot or stalked about the room. Disgusted, the deputies tilted back their chairs against the wall and refused to pay any attention to these childish antics. All at once Climax Jim flung his pants across the face of the deputy who sat nearest the door, blinding him. The other deputy awoke from a catnap just in time to see the rustler grab his pants and disappear into the darkness outside.

The evening following this escapade, Climax Jim was reported to have crawled into the camp of Joe

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Pearce, a ranger. As he was mounting Joe's horse for a quick get-away, he was apprehended and arrested by the ranger, with the aid of a rifle. It was a cold night and as the campfire burned low, the thinly clad outlaw complained that he was cold. He picked up a handful of tree limbs and brush and threw it on the fire. The fire blazed high with a great billow of smoke that blinded the ranger who stood near, hovering over it. When Joe Pearce recovered from a fit of choking and coughing, the outlaw had disappeared again in the bushes and the darkness.

For some time after that disappearnce, Climax Jim was reported to be spending money freely in various gambling houses, dressed in a neat black suit, silk shirt and a bright necktie. The casual observer would hardly recognize the cattle rustler, but the seasoned cattleman or lawman was not mistaken in the stride of a seasoned cowboy-cattle rustler.

Rumors flew and tall tales of Climax Jim's tricks and outlandish antics rolled up like a snowball. When officers apprehended and the law attempted to prosecute, they found that the worst said about Climax Jim was true. But the audacious cowboy cattle rustler and clever gambler slipped through their fingers like a rattlesnake slips through a lariat.

During his last year as a cattle rustler Climax Jim herded a bunch of steers into the mining tonw of Clifton and sold them to a butcher shop. Disgruntled with the price paid for them, Climax raised the check to a more satisfactory amount. Arrested and taken to jail, Jim picked the jail's door lock and rode away on a saddle-horse tied in front of the saloon. Nighttime and the law found the rustler-outlaw making camp on the slope of Alkali Flats, a desert wasteland near the town of Wilcox. Tying his horse to a mesquite tree, using his saddle for a pillow and his blanket for a bed, Climax Jim was soon sound asleep.

Deputy Sheriff Crookneck Johnson, an expert tracker, soon crossed the trail of Climax Jim, which led him to Alkali Flats. There the trail ended. To make a long story short, this escapade brought Climax Jim to this — his final trial.

The attorney turned and pointed a stern finger at Climax and pleaded with the jury to do its duty. Finally the judge ruled that the best evidence of guilt they had was the check which had been altered and cashed. A witness from the bank was sworn in and he identified the check. The attorney

Continued on next page

Sign On Featuring Carl Breihan

Top Western Writers Answer Your Questions About Today's West

Did you know that Jim Jenkins, famous outlaw hunter, and the man who ran to earth scores of bandits during his heyday, turned philanthropist in his old age? He erected a home for the children of the men who were sent to prison throug his efforts, or of men he had killed.

The home was open, free of charge, to the wives and children of any criminals of the Southwest, and cost $20,000 back in the 1800's . . . a large sum for those days.

It is said that Jenkins earned more than $50,000 for his efforts to bring in train robbers and outlaws in all categories, most of it paid by express companies, the government, and the railroads. Jim, 65 years old at that time said, "I want to give back, that is, offer some consolation to the families of the men whom I have run to earth. I feel it is my duty to do this."

The home was erected in the center of a 5,000 acre ranch he owned near Pryor Creek, Oklahoma Territory. Jim went about the territory seeking patrons for the home. One time while in Wichita he had this to say, "I am growing old, and feel like I am going to die soon. I have no family to leave my fortune to, and think I could do no more charitable deed than build a home for the children and wives of the men whom I have captured and had sent to the penitentiary. I prefer to do this than have my money wasted by some unknown persons to whom I have done neither harm nor good."

During his forty years as a scout Jenkins had chased after Jesse James, Bob Ford, Bill Dalton, Bill Cook and many other lesser knowns of the outlaw fraternity. He was leader of a group of deputy marshals that captured Cherokee Bill Goldsby in 1895, and he ran to earth both the Jennings and the Williams gangs.

Jenkins stated, without boasting, he had assisted in the capture of 150 bad men; that is, men who had gained a reputation as train robbers, to say nothing of the whiskey peddlers and gamblers. In the Dalton raid at Coffeyville, Kansas, when the gang was nearly wiped out, Jenkins was shot eight times in various parts of his body, and laid out for dead from a shot in the shoulder.

"Guess I was just too tough to die then," he said, with a grin, when recounting his experiences with friends. "Anyway, I lived, but there were a lot of close calls."

In a few words Jenkins recalled that Crawford "Cherokee Bill" Goldsby was arrested for the murder of Ernest Melton at Lenapah, during the robbery of the John Schufelt store. Bill had seen Melton watching the proceedingsfrom a side window of a building across the street from the store. This angered Goldsby, and he swore an oath and brought his rifle to his shoulder. One sharp crack and Melton fell dead, his brain pierced by a bullet fired by one of the most desperate and blood-thirsty outlaws of the Indian Territory.

In January of 1895, Deputy Marshal Smith and Ike Rogers planned to capture Goldsby by tempting the intended victim with whiskey, doctored with morphine, but Bill refused to drink. It was a cat-and-mouse game, for Bill was ever on the alert, even sleeping with his Winchester clutched in one hand. On January 30th, however, their chance came. Bill stooped over the fireplace to light a cigarette when Ike Rogers picked up a heavy piece of firewood and struck Goldsby in the back of the head with it. The blow would have killed an ordinary man, but it only stunned Bill. After a terrible struggle, the two men were able to handcuff Cherokee Bill. Even then, he almost escaped the next day by breaking the cuffs.

Cherokee Bill Goldsby was taken to the Federal prison at Fort Smith, Arkansas, where he was subsequently hanged on the afternoon of March 17, 1896.

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CLIMAX JIM *from page 55*

prepared to introduce the check as evidence. The young lawyer defending Climax Jim jumped to his feet, waved his arms and shouted objections. The county attorney sprang up and a bitter argument ensued. The check was placed on the table so that the attorney might have full use of his hands in clinching his argument. The judge and jury were intensely watching the attorney, but the steel-blue eyes of the defendant were elsewhere.

Reaching into the folds of his shirt, Climax Jim withdrew a moist plug of Climax Tobacco. After biting off a mouthful he laid the sticky plug on the table and stroked his shaggy mustache. He chewed complacently for a moment then reached for the rest of the plug. This he restored to the bosom of his shirt as he crumpled a paper that had adhered to the sticky tobacco. Stroking his mustache again he placed the crumpled paper in his mouth.

The argument of the attorney continued as the defendant chewed on unassumingly. When the judge finally ruled that the check was admissable, Climax Jim quickly swallowed and the "prima facie" evidence that supported the Territory's indictment slithered down the throat of the outlaw.

After court adjourned, Climax Jim supposedly buried his running irons with his past. He agreed with the judge that honesty was the best policy, and that he would settle down to become a "respected citizen." It was said that he began courting a local school teacher, and that they often went for long horseback rides in the foothills of the White Mountains. No doubt he told her many fascinating tales of Arizona's badmen who rustled cattle and cunningly evaded the law. Perhaps he watched as her eyes grew large and round as he explained in detail how a man might easily remove his handcuffs and leg irons or how he might use nimble fingers and a cunning mind to open jail-house doors.

Records hold that Climax Jim (Jim Thomas), Rufus Nephews filed on a homestead not far from the town of Morenci, Arizona, a rich and valuable mining land. In due time he sold his land for $10,000, and moved to the fabulous state of California where he settled down with his bride to live happily ever after. It is also reported that Climax Jim died a natural death of old age in about 1927.

"He was one cattle rustler who made crime pay," wrote Joe Pearce in his scrap book. Other old-timers, newspaper clippings and court records tell the rest.

JARBRIDGE STAGE *from page 18*

jumper had been fined heavily for his premature deed. Now, it was known, he needed money. So, with several pieces of inanimate evidence, including a blood-smeared coat found in the suspect's cabin, Joe Harris met Ben Kuhl when he came off shift at the mine. "Ben," he said, "I'm sorry, but from the looks of things you'll have to come to Elko with me so we can maybe get some certain matters cleared up." That was Sheriff Harris' unostentatious way of saying "You're under arrest," and the reason half a lifetime was spent as Elko County's Sheriff.

"Fine Joe," Kuhl replied with almost a laugh. "Looks like you suspect me of doing in Fred Searcy. But Fred was my friend and besides I had nothing whatever to do with that dirty deal."

This writer happened to be in Elko the day Kuhl was brought in and heard on every hand the venomous statements and shouts of "That low lifed bastard'll hang for this!"

Kuhl didn't "hang." What had, at first glance, looked like an open and shut case turned into a mass of confusing evidence. There had been bloody hand prints on the leather pouch and a 32-20 Frontier Colt, the exact model as that of Searcy's, found in Kuhl's cabin with one empty shell in the cylinder. As for this and the blood-caked coat found in his cabin a partner of Kuhl's swore that neither the gun nor the blood-smeared coat belonged to Kuhl. A couple other defense witnesses said Kuhl had been in Crumley's Saloon from the time he got off shift until the news of the murder broke. Pinned down on the time element they admitted it could have been the evening before.

But one big drawback was the lack of expert ballistic and fingerprint testimony which is now so common and could have clinched the case. Defense lawyers lacking a spark of concrete evidence for rebuttal usually rely on confusing and discrediting witnesses, and so it was in the Kuhl case. A question by the defense sent a road of levity through spectators and jury when Sheriff Harris was asked if he could "positively swear that Fred Searcy for unknown reasons had not shot himself."

"I believe it safe to say," replied Harris, "that unless Searcy was a contortionist and had several lives he could not have shot himself in the back of the skull then placed his gun back in his holster, rifled the mail sacks and tied up his team."

Despite the fact that not a penny of the $3,000.00 consigned to Newt Crumley or another $1,000.00 the mail pouch held was found in or about Kuhl's cabin (and as far as anyone can say, never has been found) Kuhl was promptly convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment and served just under thirty years in the Carson Prison.

But to some of the old timers and to hordes of picnickers that incident gave plenty of work. They upended every boulder near the path the killer had taken between where the stage was found and Kuhl's cabin and to this day occasional neophyte "Prospectors" have been seen going over that ground with Geiger Counters and the latest metal detectors. Who can say, but perhaps some day a ready made *minted* "mine" may be discovered in the old town by some member of that ilk whose faith never dies.

As for the few Old Timers they invariably used the Kuhl-Searcy incident as a calender by which to reckon Time. This writer was at Newt Crumley's Commercial Hotel Bar in 1945 and overheard a dried-out, bony little individual arguing some point. It was "Tuscarora Jack." (No doubt there were some who knew his name but if so they never bothered to use it.)

"No," Jack said, "you're wrong. We didn't find Searcy an' his stage the next day a-tall. It was that same night! It was just three-four days before that I'd made my first big strike an'—"

"Way off base, Jack," came his opponent's positive statement. "It was the next day! Besides, I never knowed of any second strike by you."

"The hell I didn't!" Jack stoutly replied. "Made that one in Tuscarora an' ten years later hit 'er again at Lone Mountain! Made 'er slow but By God we sure cut Ol' Tige an' run the cats up the creek while she lasted! "Aint's that right, Jum?" he asked the bartender. "I spent enough right over this bar to of owned the whole shebang here."

"You're right, Jack," the bartender agreed. "You sure slung the cash around while she lasted. Kept half the town drunk for two months and I don't mean maybe."

"You're damn tootin', I did!" Jack proudly admitted. "An' if my face is good for another round for me an' Hank I'll let yuh in on somethin'. I'm headin' for the hills tomorrow. Got my eye on a good outcropping up North o' here. An' for you," he said, turning his rheumy eyes on his free drinking partner, "if anybody even wants to know anything about the date that Jarbridge Stage was late you just send 'em t' ol' Tuscarora Jack."

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MEHLHORN'S GOLD *from page 22*

"Two of us boys spelled pa and the other boy standing guard with our shotguns to keep them buggers off our land," Case said, recounting the events in subsequent years, "Whilst the other two, ma helping, dug every place we could think of."

The boys were even more bitter than their father. "We had worked all them years without regular wages figuring on that thousand leaving money," Case said. "Some days whilst we dug we put the blame on Noah and other times we laid it on pa for being too hasty with that mule whip."

The Mehlhorns were still digging when Winter came, ending the search for the cache which Mehlhorn, a meticulous record keeper, reported as containing 732 double eagles, ($20 gold coins), 519 eagles ($10 gold coins), 214 half eagles ($5 gold coins) and 980 3-dollar gold pieces. Total $23,840, a fortune in the 1870's.

"We dug every decent winter day," Case said, "and then as soon as spring came and the ground got hard enough to be dug in after the spring snow melt."

They didn't find the cache. Another financial blow struck the Mehlhorns in 1871. Fort Sedgwick was decommissioned and its troops dispersed to other forts; the Indians in northeastern Colorado had been subdued, Sedgwick was no longer needed.

At the same time road traffic diminished, practically by the day. Most west-bound pilgrims were going to Denver and other points on the recently completed railroad trains, the railroad companies promoting family travel to "western points" with attractive rates and promises of free land.

"Us boys said the hell with it in the spring of '72," Case told later. "But pa was stubborn as a mule and he said he'd say 'till he either found our money or died trying."

He didn't do either. He sold out, embittered, frustrated and nearly broke, three years after his sons pulled up stakes.

Noah had hidden the cache well because it has never been found though after Mehlhorn sold out and moved to Greeley — where he died in 1904 — literally hundreds of treasure seekers dug, hacked, picked and rummaged every inch of the once-prosperous hog farm.

Where did the addle-brained boy hide the gold?

"I had the feeling it was right there close," Case said shortly before his death in 1912. "But we looked and dug everywhere so I must of been wrong, though I still got that feeling."

GUNNESS MONSTER *from page 29*

bother me no more. We fixed him for keeps."

Apparently Lamphere was telling the truth, as events were soon to prove. Events put into motion by Alse Helgelein, brother of the missing Andrew. Alse wrote to Belle asking about his brother. Belle replied that Andrew had gone away, possibly to Norway. Alse replied that this was asinine, or words to that effect. Not to be outdone, Belle wrote back inviting Alse to join her in a search for Andrew. She hinted that such a search cost money, and probably intimated that her funds were insufficient for such a hunt.

Apparently Belle now began to fear that she would be found out. She went to an attorney in LaPorte, and said she was fearful that Ray Lamphere would kill her. He had threatened to burn down her house, she claimed. She wanted to make a will. The lawyer drew up a hasty will; Belle signed it. It specified that her estate was to go to her three children, Myrtle and Lucy Sorenson, and Phillip Gunness. If the children should predecease her, the beneficiary was a Norwegian home for children in Chicago. In view of later discoveries, this last bequest seems rather incongruous for the woman that Belle Gunness turned out to be.

After signing the will, Belle went to the local bank to pay off a note for $500. That was the last anyone saw the Widow Gunness, except for a man who claimed to have heard a brief conversation between Lamphere and Belle that afternoon in LaPorte. "It's got to be done tonight," Belle had said.

The Gunness farmhouse burned down that night. The only survivor of the fire was the latest hired man, Joe Maxson. Maxson claimed that he had called to the others, who had been in the house that evening when he had retired. However, he received no answer, and as the flames advanced, Maxson jumped out the second story window of his room, clad only in his underwear.

"I WONDER, RUNNING WOLF, IF, INSTEAD OF 'UGH', YOU COULD SAY 'I DO'?"

Four bodies were found in the charred remains of the farmhouse. They were Lucy, Myrtle, Phillip and one headless corpse.

Ray Lamphere was arrested, in light of his recent threats against Belle Gunness. When he heard the news of the fire from the sheriff, Lamphere asked: "Did Widow Gunness and the kids get out?" Then he went on to deny having set the fire. But shortly, an eye-witness came forward, a young boy who said he had seen Lamphere running from the Gunness yard shortly before the flames erupted from the house. He claimed that Lamphere had found him hidden in some bushes, and threatened to kill him if he didn't go away immediately.

By the time Lamphere was brought to trail for murder, several neighbors had viewed the headless body, and insisted that it was too small, too short to be Belle Gunness. A brother and sister of Jennie Olson came from Chicago, worried about Jennie's whereabouts. They said they had known Belle all their lives, and the body definitely was not that of Belle Gunness.

Now, modern 1908 police methods were implemented. The charred corpse was measured, and allowing for a missing head and neck, it was decided that the dead woman had been 5 ft. 3 in. tall, about 150 pounds in weight. Clerks in stores in nearby LaPorte were interviewed. Those who had sold Belle diverse articles of clothing gave what information they could remember about her sizes. All things taken into consideration, it was determined that Belle Gunness had been larger in the biceps by 8 inches, in the bust by 10 inches, 11 in the waist, and 14 in the hips.

There being no really definite proof of the identity of the headless woman, police cited the finding of the engraved wedding rings on the body as proof that it was Belle Gunness. Whether the rings had been on the fingers for a long or short time could not be discerned due to the burned flesh. But it was rumored that a mysterious dark-haired woman had been seen with Mrs. Gunness, driving to the farm on McClung Road. The authorities were in desperate need of a head for the victim of the fire, in order to make positive identification.

Continued on next page

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VALLEY CALLED DEATH

Continued from page 33

and disappeared for good. Years later, his rifle stock and some gold coins were found in a rocky portion of the canyon, which bears his name. A sudden cloudburst probably snuffed out his life.

1908 was the year one of the areas oldest miners decided to go into Rhyolite and tie one on. Bill Ryan went on a truly monumental drunk, even according to miners standards. After a slight bit of sobering up, he set out from town for Furnace Creek.

Part way along the trail, he knew he wasn't going to make it. So he lay down next to the road and died quietly. A combination of terrific heat and bad booze did him in.

Searchers buried him on the side of the road where they found him. Any attempt to move a body after it had been exposed to heat and scorching sun for any length of time was impossible as well as very unpleasant.

In August, 1909, two intripid miners attempted to walk from Rhyolite to Skidoo. Charles Bodge and Thomas Flause, both prominent residents of Rhyolite, again left in the most dangerous part of the year, summer.

The two travelers stopped at Stove Pipe Wells to replenish their water supply, but were disappointed in what they found. They had to shovel out a new well then wait for it to fill very slowly. Not wanting to waste any more precious time, they pushed on towards Skidoo.

They never made it alive. Flause got only a short distance from Stove Pipe Wells, having been poisoned by bad water. Bodge got to within four miles of his goal before dying of thirst. Both were found and brought to Skidoo where they lie buried in the town's cemetary.

The work "UNKNOWN" marks many a headstone in Death Valley. Those who have names on their headboards should be considered fortunate. Someone took the time to remember.

Think for just a moment about the UNKNOWN. Not just in Death Valley, but along the Oregon Trail, the Santa Fe, and Boothills throughout the West. The victim was once a tiny baby probably with proud and loving parents. The baby grew to man or woman hood. They had hopes for the future, plans for a batter life. What dreams they must have had.

Then to die unknown, alone, in a land seemingly forgotten by God. Perhaps driven to insanity by thirst, poisoned by bad water, or murdered by Indians trying to protect their home. It is not a very pretty thought.

GUNNESS MONSTER *from page 57*

Meantime, Alse Helgelein had arrived from South Dakota, and went to Sheriff Smutzer to report his brother's disappearance. He suspected the Belle had somehow managed to kill Andrew and take his money. Alse insisted that the sheriff make a second tour of the Gunness farm. Smutzer had already searched the farmhouse and yard for the missing head, with no results. Now, he ordered his men to break in the gate of the fenced garden which Belle had kept so private. At first it seemed a harmless depository for trash. Joe Maxson had said that Belle had him take dirt in to level the holes where the trash had been dumped. And then one deputy hit "pay dirt" — he found a grisly gunny sack containing a neatly-hacked body. Alse Helgelein's suspicions had proved correct — "Andy" Helgelein had been found.

By sundown of the same day, four more bodies had been located in Belle's private graveyard. One was 16-year-old Jennie Olson, and there were two other children. The fourth was a tall, mustached man. Four more bodies were found the next day, May 4th, another on May 5th. In all, ten persons were buried in that fenced "garden."

"Bodies, woman! Now I know what was going on!" screamed Ray Lamphere when told of the gruesome relics at the Gunness farm.

The digging continued. Besides Jennie and Andrew, positive identification was made of John Moo, Ole Budsberg, and two other Norwegians who had answered Belle's ads for matrimony, Messrs. Olaf Lindbloom and Eric Gerhalt, plus another hired man, name unknown.

As if the police didn't have enough trouble, new witnesses came to dispute the identity of the headless body. They claimed they had seen the dark-haired mystery woman at the LaPorte depot, after she alighted from the evening train from Chicago, and that Belle had met her. The two women had driven out to the Gunness farm — the same tale that had only been rumored before. Joe Maxson was interviewed but claimed that he had seen no stranger that night. He did say that the "queer place," Belle's home, might have housed the dark-haired woman without his seeing her. Public opinion, however had decided that Belle had brought a woman to the farm to be her "stand-in," and that Belle had fled to safety.

"MAY I HAVE ANOTHER DRINK OF WATER?"

Two more people now joined in the investigation. One was Dr. Ira P. Norton, prominent dentist of LaPorte. Reading about the grisly goings-on at the Gunness farm, Norton notified the police that he had done a gold and porcelain bridge for Belle. Since the caps and teth would not melt until 2000 degrees farenheit, as hot as the flame of a blowpipe, there was a good possibility he could identify the Widow Gunness' teeth, if they could be found. But how were the searchers to find a few small teeth in the ashes of a two-story farmhouse?

Enter Louis Schultz, miner recently returned from the Yukon. In line with his former mode of employment, Schultz volunteered to set up a sluice box on Belle's farm. It only took a little lumber, and there was plenty of running water. Louis swore if there was any gold in the ruins, he could cull it out.

Thus began a weird operation, with thousands of on-lookers. (Six thousand persons were estimated to have been on the side in one day.) They were kibitzing at Klondike Louis as he worked. In Chicago, the newspapers kept up daily reports on the miner's progress. Bookies formed pools, taking bets on the date and hour that Louis would find the "gold." Hucksters sold popcorn and tonic water to the crowd of curious people.

On the fourth day, the bookie pool was won. Schultz washed out a piece of bridgework — two lower bicuspids capped with gold, flanking four porcelain teeth. "My work, positively," said Dr. Ira P. Norton. "Those are Mrs. Gunness' teeth." (Later the authorities declared that the teeth should have had burn marks on them, even if they didn't melt or burn. They were suspicious of Louis Schultz, who meanwhile had disappeared, several hundred dollars richer from his "digs" in the Gunness farmhouse.)

And so, with this skimpy evidence, Ray Lamphere went on trial in LaPorte for murdering his

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employer. He was quickly acquitted, due to the efforts of Wirt Worden, his attorney. Evidently the jury believed Belle was still alive; but at his subsequent trial for arson, they convicted Ray Lamphere of burning Belle's farmhouse. He was sent to Michigan City prison, about 17 miles from the scene of his revenge.

How had Lamphere escaped Belle's bloody axe? Maybe because he was willing to help with the burials, Belle felt she needed him. Or maybe Belle only hankered to slaughter Scandinavian men. Besides, Lamphere had no money she could steal. Then again, maybe Lamphere was too alert to be caught unawares. Lamphere didn't dwell on that facet of his relationship with the Hoosier Monster. But he did say that Belle had killed Peter Gunness, not by jiggling the shelf to knock down the strangely-mobile sausage-grinder, as had been suspicioned, but by hitting him over the head with her axe. The statement was confirmed when one of little Myrtle Sorenson's playmates reported that Myrtle had once said: "Mama brained Papa with an axe. Don't tell a soul."

Most of the citizens of LaPorte to this day believe that Belle, who had withdrawn most of her bank account, killed the dark-haired woman, set the fire, or had Lamphere do it, and disappeared safely with her ill-gotten loot. Ray Lamphere substantiated that by his dying confession that he had driven Belle to a railroad depot about 12 or 15 miles from LaPorte the day before the fire.

Through the years, reports placed Belle as far off as Mississippi. In 1931, a body found in Los Angeles was at first thought to be that of Mrs. Gunness. Queries about her used to come to the sheriff of LaPorte a dozen times a year, for more than 20 years. There are still occasional inquiries. But mostly, Belle Gunness is now a part of Indiana folklore — a part Indiana is not particularly proud to claim.

Belle has been immortalized in journalistic jargon; an ad in the matrimonial journals and lonely hearts clubs that is from a widow looking for a spouse, has long been called "a Belle Gunness." There is also a rather maudlin song about her, to the tune of "Love, O Careless Love."

Belle Gunness lived in In-di-an;
She always, always had a man.
Ten at least went in her door,
And were never, never seen no more.

In addition to its deplorable grammer, the song does seem to circumnavigate the real truth. But then, probably the real truth will never be known about Belle Gunness and her victims. All her reasons for mass murder remain conjecture.

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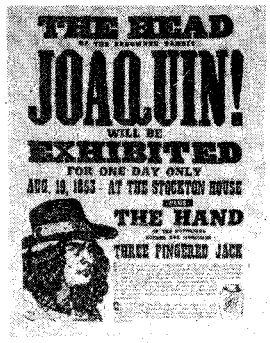
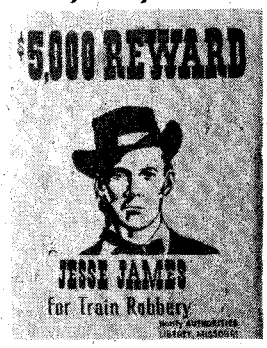


Jesse James



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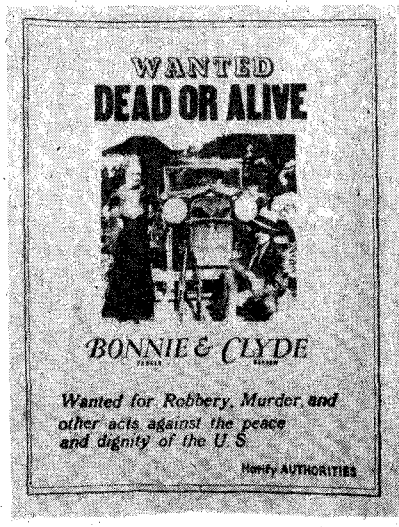

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SEARCHING THE MINE *from page 36*

burros on this trail," I panted at one point.

Wayne paused a moment for us to catch our breath.

"It has weathered some down through the years, and some of the edge has caved into the canyon now. As a matter of fact, there is one little spot up near the top that is a bit bad; but it is narrow enough you can step over it without any trouble."

After we had climbed perhaps an eighth of a mile farther, Wayne called back over his shoulder, "We're coming to that little bad spot I told you about, but you can just jump over it. It isn't very wide."

Stepping to the brink of the crumbled ledge, I froze there, seized by sudden terror of the empty space above the jagged rocks that were a quarter of a mile below me.

"I'm sorry to act like an idiot, Wayne, but it petrifies me. I just can't cross it."

"Nonsense," Wayne tried to reassure me. "This isn't bad. You can make it. You've got to; you are going to take pictures inside the mine. Here, I'll come back for you."

With another giant stride he was beside me on the narrow ledge.

Suddenly Steve appeared on the trail beside Polly, ahead of me. While Wayne and Polly had been trying to coax me across the brink in the trail, Steve had been examining the wall of rock on our right, had found handholds and footholds, and had climbed to a ledge about eight feet above the trail. Following the ledge for forty or fifty feet, he found he could climb down to the level of the trail.

"If Steve can climb over, I can," I assured them, scrambling up the wall, along the ledge, and down on the other side.

"Well, here we are," Wayne announced triumphantly as he and Polly and Steve rounded a jutting boulder about twenty feet from where I waited on the trail. He indicated a very inconspicuous-looking hole which I had not even noticed in the solid rock wall of the mountain which still towered above us, its top sky-scraper tall agains the sky.

Steve knelt and lighted his Coleman lantern. Wayne played the beam of his three-cell flashlight over the japped rock walls inside and we followed him into the tunnel.

I doubt that our moon explorers felt much more awe when they stepped out onto the surface of the moon than I felt walking along the inside of the mountain, looking at as much of its structure as showed on the surface of the tunnels, and trying to grasp the stupenduous magnitude of the mine and the ability of the mining engineers who had developed it.

To anyone at all familiar with mines and mining methods, my attempt to describe our afternoon exploring only a small section of one level of that famous old mine would be pitifully inadequate.

For a time we might be walking down-grade with the ceiling only a few inches above our head, then find ourselves climbing a sharp incline with the ceiling so high above us that our lights hardly could pick it up.

We had to be on constanct alert for open shafts which yawned without warning in the drifts. And all afternoon, as we followed the winding, separating, dividing, confusing labyrinth of tunnels, I kept hoping that Wayne would be able to find our way out again!

All scaffolding from which the miners had worked to remove the ore-laden rock from the heights of the ceiling had been removed. Other than the timbers in the chutes and ladders extending to the next level, all signs of any machinery or equipment was completely lacking from the level we explored, and the tunnels might have been caves made by Nature when the mountain was formed.

With lighting only from Steve's Coleman lantern and Wayne's three-cell flashlight added to my camera's flash bulbs, I had misvgivings about the pictures I was taking in the Stygian blackness of the mine, and was happily surprised that they were recognizable when they were developed.

While spending a Saturday afternoon exploring the tunnels of this old mine isn't the kind of caper I'd recommend for my grandchildren if I were babysitting with them, like the famed donkey trip down into the Grand Canyon which most people swear they'd never take a second time, I went, and I'm sure glad I do-ed it!

When we came out of the mine, I had a deeper respect for the hardihood and industry of the generation of men who worked in the gold fields and silver mines, and possibly a broader understanding of why they spent their evenings drinking together in rowdy fellowship that gave them the reputation of being brawling savages.

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SHOSHONI *Continued from page 49*

range in the back of the saloon. As contestants and crowd downed whiskies in anticipation of the big event Nels was stirring a dozen eggs in each pan for a starter of scrambles.

"The eats is on me, boys," he said, chuckling, "so git yer stomachs ready." The two platters were no sooner empty, however, when Nels dumped another dozen scrambled on them. "Make my next ones boiled," Leppie called.

"Just to make it easy on yourself, Nels," Wimsey gurgled through a mouthful of eggs, "you can hit me with the same."

"You'll have fried," Nels barked. "Pots ain't boilin' yet." Four dozen each had disappeared and after dropping a dozen in the boiling pot Nels flung a cardboard separator aside, stared at the empty crate and slapped a hand to his forehead. "Moses on a tricycle!" he said as if viewing a miracle.

"What the hell's wrong now, Nels?" Wimsey yelled.

"Outa hen fruit!" Nels replied in an unbelieving tone.

"Well, you long-beaked Scandihoovian," Wimsey shouted, "Get diggin' some up!" Nels had cracked the dozen in a huge bowl and slid it along the counter to Leppie when Wimsey yelled, "Hold everything! What yuh tryin' t' pull, Nels? Them's my eggs!"

"Yourn'll be right up, George," Nels said and shouted at the swamper, (who at the moment was mopping out the gutter-trough behind the foot rail). "Hey, Dog Face! Beat it acrost t' Oakie's an' fetch me a crate o' eggs on the dead run!"

"Taint fair!" Leppie howled. "Gives whozis here a chance t' rest." mad Leppie digging into his eggs like a starved hound Bud Bridges plunked a handful of dollars in the bucket. "Ten on Leppie what's his name, there." Seeing this, The Galloping Swede snarled "Why you lousy Turn Coat! What yuh bettin' on a tin-horn for when one of our own breed is eatin' ag'in him?"

"Cause I wanta win me enough for a new Cogshell Saddle," Bud said. "Drink up an' get your money on Leppie if yuh want t' make a killin'." Old Bud was lapping up whiskey as if he expected Wyoming to go dry any minute and was getting to the thick-tongue stage.

"Well, I'll kill *your* bet," Gus said, tossing a bill in the bucket. "Twenty on Wimsey!" he said to Skaggs. "Bud, yuh orta be shamed

Continued on page 64

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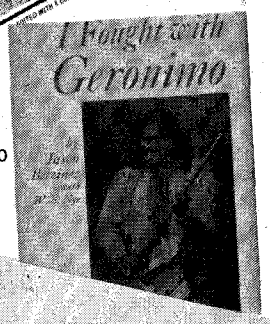

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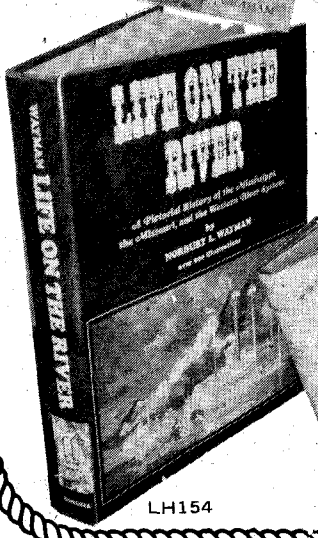

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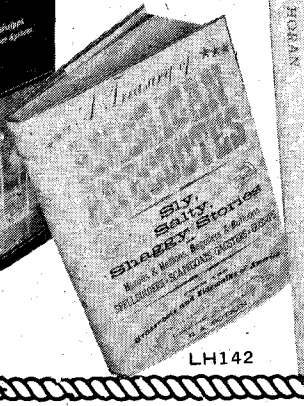

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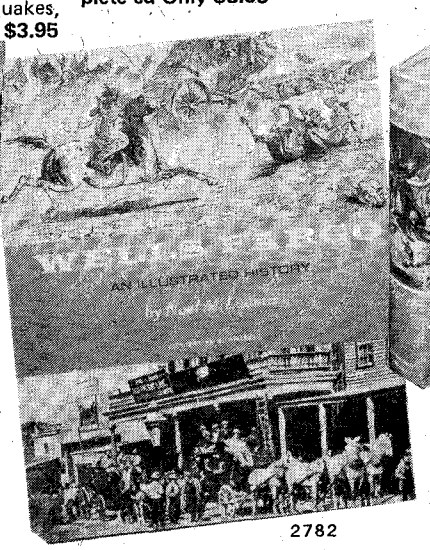

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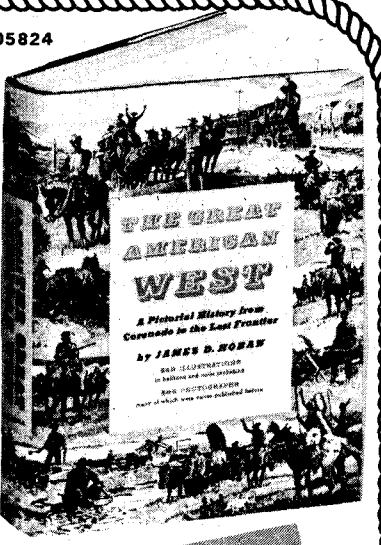

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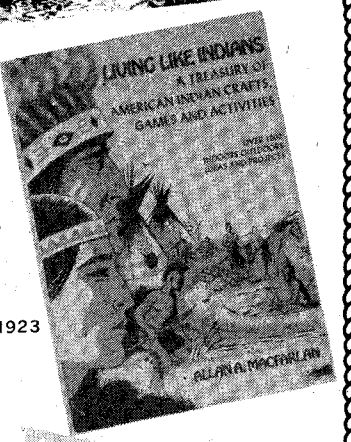

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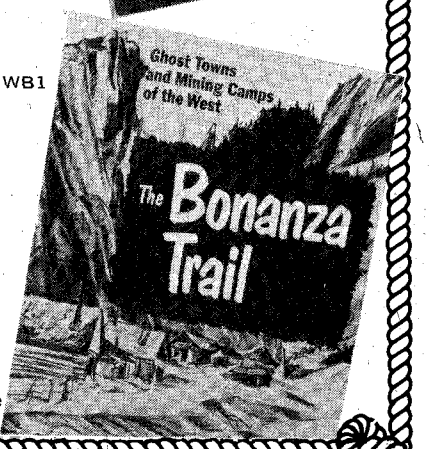

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SHOSHONI *Continued from page 60*

goin' against a cow man." Wimsey had a cow layout near Lost Cabin.

A shout went up as the swamper came puffing in with a crate against his belly, followed by a crowd. "Gangway!" someone shouted. "Make room there!"

As Nels pried the boards off the crate Wimsey called, "Don't bother cookin' 'em Nels. I'll down a couple dozen raw."

"Like hell yuh will!" Leppie said. "You'll eat same as me! An', Nels," he added, "while you're about it rush me another batch o' softies."

"While they're heatin', Wimsey shouted, "what's the score? An' you, Skaggs, set up the drinks, I feel lucky, t' day!"

"Ata Boy," Gus said. "I'm chancing another ten on yuh!" Nels hurried to the crowded menu board, erased Ham, eggs & Hot cakes 35c and chalked in Leppie 60, WimS 48. "Doggone!" Gus exclaimed. "Nels, you better not be cheatin' or you'll wish the Redskins had yuh 'stead o' me!" Looked bad, for Gus and Wimsey, alright! So bad, Bud scattered some silver on the bar knocking over several drinks. "Five more on Lepp," he mumbled. "Yuh got him where the hair's short, Lepp, so keep chawin!"

The way Wimsey scooped up his bowl of soft boiled with a table spoon and yelled at Nels to "Get a move on!" caused me to venture a ten spot on him. As he lit in on the fresh order he managed to let Nels know he could "use a few dozen fried" and bets shifted his way.

Everybody was getting so saturated with whiskey they had no idea who they were betting on. Neither did Skaggs. He was so confused between sliding bottles along the bar, trying to mark bets and giving in to everybody that he also "Have one" he twice chucked the drink money in the bucket instead of the till.

Ten minutes later when platters were filled with a mangled mess of fries Leppie mady no effort to hurry, though Wimsey lit in like he was just getting started. Nels wiped his streaming face with the burlap stove cloth and started cussing in three languages. "Craziest damn business *I* ever seen!" he huffed. "Workin' my damn guts out just to *give* grub away! How much longer you gluttons intend t' keep going?"

"Get cookin'," Wimsey warned, "or yuh won't live t' find out!" Glancing at Leppie slowly working at his eggs and seeing Nels still mopping his face he issued a final edict. "More grub, Nels! An' while you're about it let's see how we stand." Nels cracked two skillets of eggs than chalked up "L — 72 / W — 72." Apparently he was either too exhaused to write a name or hadn't the time, but with bettors and lookers shouting and guzzling whiskey at an unprecedented rate it mattered not.

With Bud standing by Leppie with a cocked .45 it looked like Bud had also gone loco. Leppie had his platter half empty when a new batch was heaped on it. "Christ!" he wheezed. "Give a man time to catch his breath, will yuh?"

His eggs were still untouched and his backers were cussing and pleading with him to "dig in" when Wimsey threw his spoon down. "To hell with this!" he said. "If that crazy fool wants to kill himself he's welcome, but damned if I'm goin' t' get *my* stomach all upset just t' win a chicken crap bet!"

"Well, take 'er slow an' rest a bit," a backer said. "You've already got 'im beat by a good half dozen."

"Not yet, he ain't!" Skaggs barked. Leaning over Leppie he urged him to go on. "Take your time, Leppie. Yuh only got t' eat three quarters o' that pile t' beat him!" But Leppie sat as if in a trance.

The place was a bedlam of shouts for and against when The Galloping Swede said, "Go get our money, Skaggs. Your man's awful sick or he's dead. So hand over the spondulix!"

"By Damn," Skaggs said as he hurried behind the bar and laid his hand on the bucket, "If one o' you guys put somethin' in his grub I'll —"

That was when Gus fetched down the side of his heavy Mauser on the part in Skaggs' hair and an explosion sent men crowding out the front door yelling "Get the Marshal!" As drunk as Bud was he grabbed the bucket and was weaving out the back door.

"Why in hell did you fire that damn blunderbuss?" I asked the Swede as we raced to catch up with Bud. "Now we're in trouble!"

"Didn't," he said. "Damn thing just went off!" Outside, Bud was looking up and down the alley, thinking he was on the street, and saying "Our horses! Them Injuns stole our horses."

The Swede was as disoriented as was Bud but I was still able to identify an alley from a street and got the two headed for the nearest corner. As we dragged Bud along, he was still mumbling "Injuns stole horses!"

Reaching the corner I heard a shout of "Halt!" and saw Skaggs (at least from the face and head being blood-covered I supposed it was Skaggs) and another that must have been the Marshal. But whoever it was, that order to "halt!" only speeded us to reach our horses.

As drunk as Bud was he had such a death grip on the bucket bail with his right hand he couldn't grasp the saddle horn so, with the Swede's help, we managed to heave him on and put the reins in his hand. We were spurring away when either the Marshal or some sorehead bettor let loose a couple shots at us.

We had reached the bridge and the Swede and I were congratulating ourselves on a lucky get away when a whirlwind spun right over Bud and we saw paper being spun away in the air. "Holy Jesus," The Swede yelled, "that lousy Dust Devil sucked half our money away!" But Bud was beyond knowing or caring. He was slumped over his horse's neck as limp as a bundle of rags.

The second he reached the wagon Bud hit the ground on his face and his stomach began emptying itself as the rolling bucket also spewed coins and bills. Old Pad Holloman and the Night Hawk were laughing as they rushed over and began gathering up our loot, but not so Pennoyer. He just stood giving us the dog eye. "You're a fine looking bunch," he finally said. "What the hell you been up to?"

"Got in an Injun fight," I said without elaborating on our tattered appearance.

"Looks more like you been in a poker fight!" Pennoyer growled.

"Injuns stole our horses," Bud gurgled.

"Well it will be a damned cold day in August," Pennoyer snapped "before you talk fast enough to get off for a sashay into Shoshoni again! Yes, or any other town!"

"Don't scold us, George," Bud managed to moan. "Can't you see I'm a sick woman?" Every time Bud got drunk, sick drunk, his complaint never varied; he was a "sick woman."

"To hell with Shoo-shoney!" The Swede put in. "It'd have t' be rainin' turkey soup in January an' me starvin' before I ever want to see *that* burg again!"

An inventory of our winnings (or somebody's winnings) showed we had done pretty good. In fact *mighty* good. After enough was calculated for Bud's "Charlie Cogshell" saddle there was plenty left, with interest, to compensate us for the loss of shirts even if our shirts had been of brocaded silk instead of dollar a throw stuff. But Pennoyer relented and even joined us in a *real* celebration two weeks later when we got in Thermopolis where a Newspaper Men's Convention was going full blast.

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NABORS PANE'S *from page 25*

(Beforehand, Tom had thoughtfully pointed out a large butcher knife, used for slicing meat, to Nabors.) Needless to say it was a tremendous shock to Cousin Roy, which may explain why he did not run at once, but stood rooted to the floor, wide-eyed and mouth agape, staring at the apparition that danced between him and the door. The knife seemed to get closer to his nose each time the wild man swung it through the air. Adding to Cousin Roy's confusion was Tom shouting that it was a Indian uprising and that everyone had better run for their lives.

Howard had taken one look at Tom and, knowing Nabors loved to joke, had jumped behind the Levi counter to peep out and watch the show. This left Cousin Roy on his own to figure a way out of the "dangerous" situation.

Cousin Roy saw he could not make it out the front door without passing within reach of the crazed Indian so, with a look and speed like a brick wall would have have stopped him, he made a dash out the back door. Following close on his heels was the howling, blood-thirsty, savage.

Nabors stopped at the back door and began laughing loudly. Tom and Howard came up to look over his shoulder and saw the reason for the Choctaw's laughter.

Near the corral, some twenty yards behind the store, with a fence post raised high over his head in an attitude of Custer's Last Stand, Cousin Roy was ready to do battle with the rampaging redman.

Tom and Howard heartily joined the old Choctaw in the thigh-slapping laughter. Cousin Roy at once saw he had been the victim of Tom and Nabors' practical joke and, to do him justice, he joined in the laugh on himself.

Tom and Nabors are gone now but we can still recall with a good laugh, the Nabors Pane "Uprising" at Rufe, Oklahoma.

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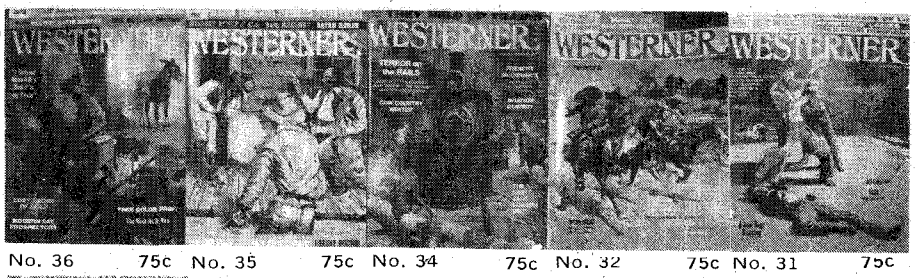

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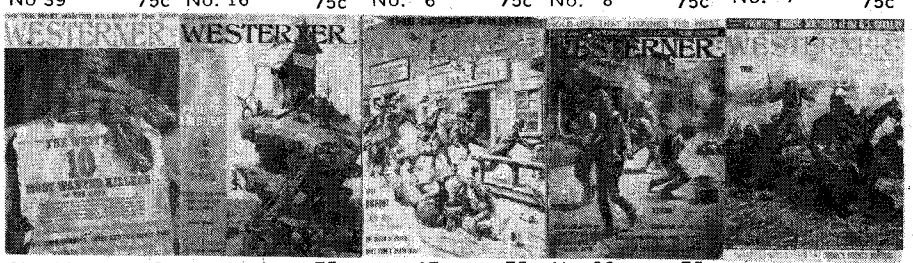

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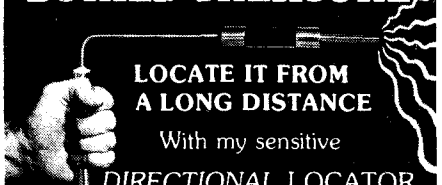

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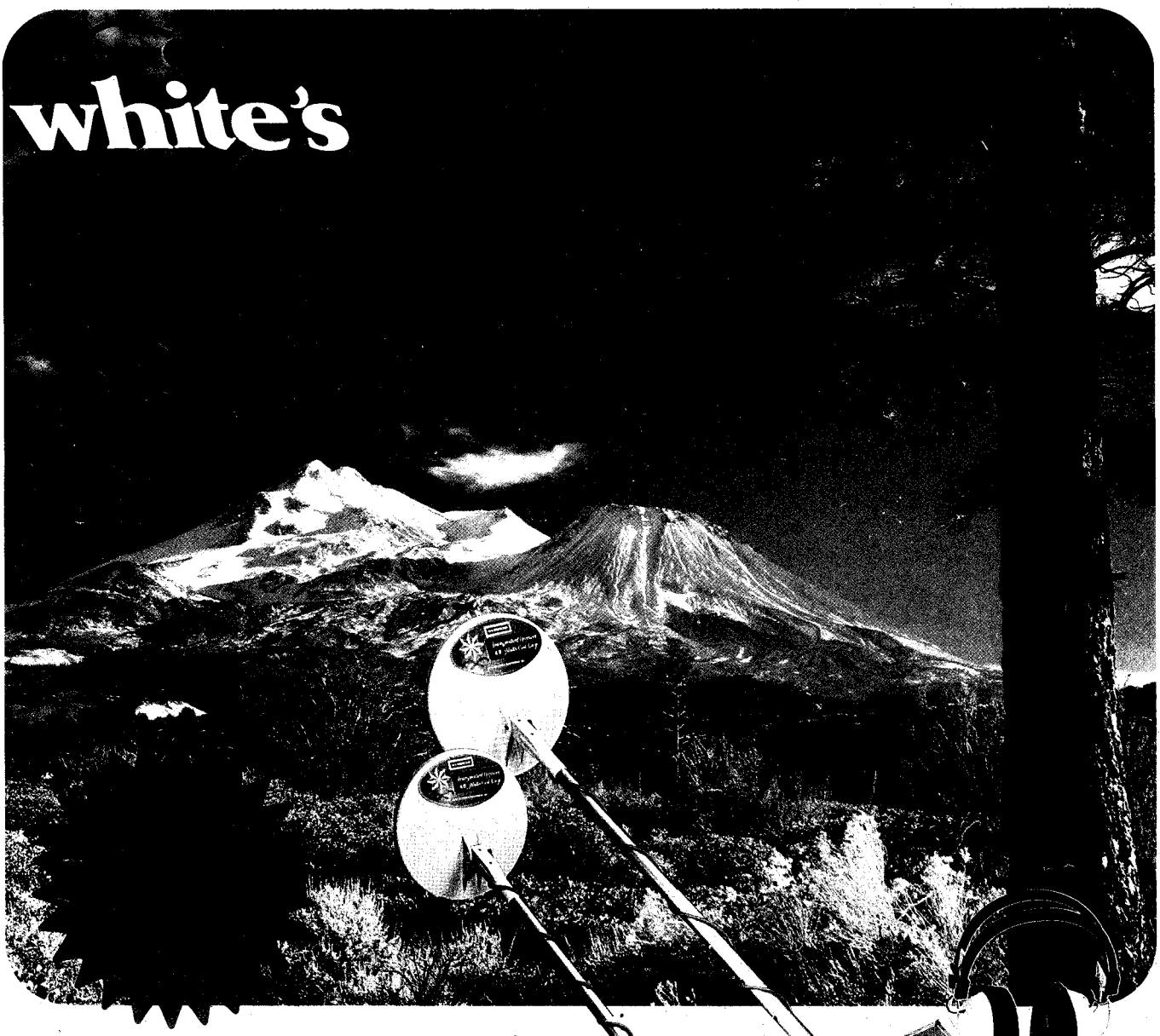

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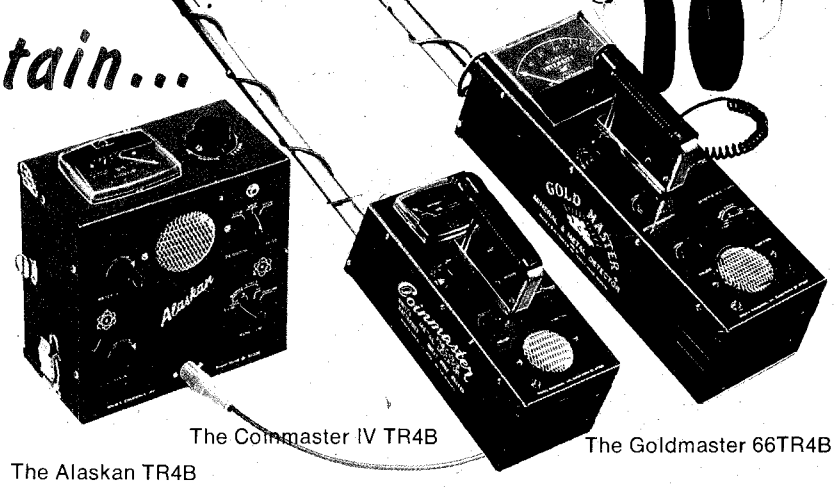

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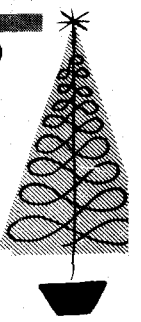

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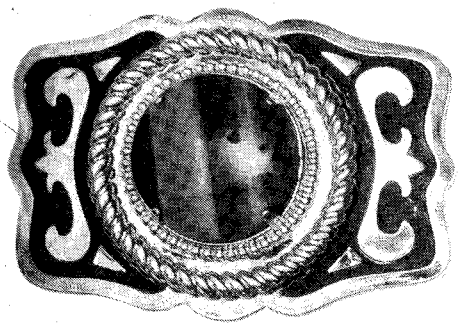

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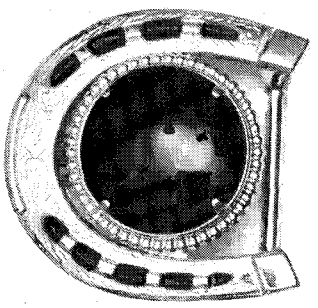

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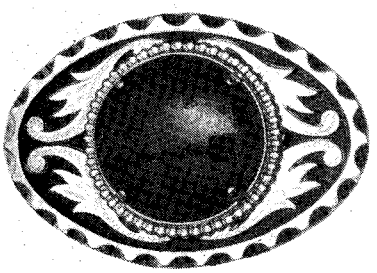

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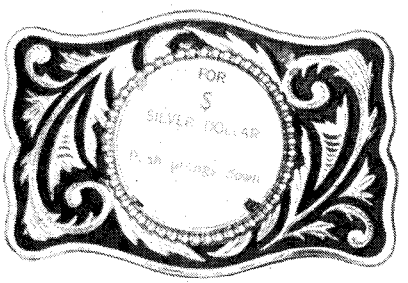

U-855 1¾" belt

U-860 1¾" belt

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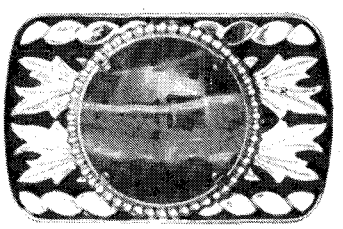

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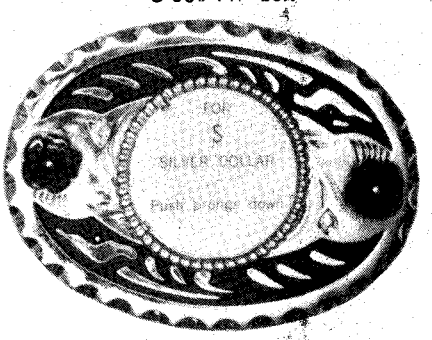

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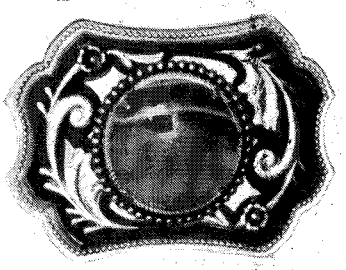

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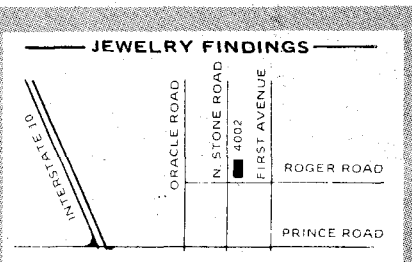

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